

College

Composition and Communication

THE OFFICIAL BULLETIN OF THE CONFERENCE ON
COLLEGE COMPOSITION AND COMMUNICATION

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EDITOR

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The Freshman Program at Western Michigan College¹

ROBERT LIMPUS²

At Western Michigan College, we have problems. Principally, they are growing pains. We are experiencing the expansion of facilities and functions which I suspect is happening to a good many low-tuition, tax-supported colleges. We now have about four thousand students and a faculty, including our staff of critic teachers, of about three hundred. Originally chartered to perform only one function, the preparation of public school teachers, we now prepare at least half our students to be a variety of things, from airline hostesses to pulp and paper technologists.

Even though we are a teachers college, we feel no obligation to make a methods course of anything which is not labeled such. Our freshman English work, whether it is Rhetoric or Communication, is directed toward the improvement of the student regardless of the curriculum which he intends to follow. In spite of some pressure from some parts of the college, we have refused to establish sections for students in particular curricula: music, home economics, occupational therapy, and what not. We believe that the fundamental problems of English-language training (clear thinking, adaptation to an audience, and choice of instruments) are the same, whether the student is going to be a shop foreman or a lawyer. That is not to say that we expect that all people will use the same language, but that all people will have to try to solve the same basic problems.

¹ An abridgment of a paper read at the Spring Meeting of the Conference on College Composition and Communication, March 13, 1953, at Chicago, Illinois.

² Western Michigan College of Education

As I have indicated, we have at present two courses for freshmen, Rhetoric and Communication. Most of the time, we are able to hold the size of classes to a maximum of twenty-five students. Rhetoric is a two-semester, three-hour course which follows very much the pattern of the traditional freshman composition course. It is a course in writing and reading—particularly writing, since before the establishing of our course in Communication, it was assumed that elementary training in speaking was entirely the province of the freshman course in the Speech Department. In Rhetoric, we are not primarily concerned with "creative writing" (you know what I mean by that term), but we are concerned with the practical, workaday use of the language. By that, I don't mean to say that we teach nothing but letter-writing. We try to help the student with the kind of writing, if any, that he will have to do in other courses, and with writing which will increase his effectiveness in the common experiences of an educated person. Analysis of important ideas and effective reporting of common experiences are considered to be useful to everyone.

For several years, we have made a strenuous effort to have Rhetoric be a course rather than an assortment of classes taught with good intentions but poor coordination by individual instructors. We have never tried to produce a day-by-day syllabus; however, we do try to provide an outline of a sequence of events so that Rhetoric 106A as taught by Mr. Black bears a marked resemblance to Rhetoric 106A as taught by Miss White, and students of both instructors can enter, on an equal basis,

Rhetoric 106B. We have made a great deal of progress toward uniformity and sharpening the purposes of the course. Departmental adoption of textbooks and uniform final examinations have helped. I think that perhaps the presence of Communication as, in some ways, a competing course will be stimulating to the Rhetoric staff.

At present, the textbooks used in Rhetoric are: a dictionary, either the *ACD* or Webster's sixth edition *Collegiate*; the revised edition of Birk and Birk, *Understanding and Using English* for the first semester; and Sams and McNeir, *Problems in Reading and Writing* for the second semester. Our semester outlines include the writing of ten papers of from 300 to 600 words in the first semester, and eight papers totaling 6000 words in the second semester. One of these eight must be a research paper. With the exception of an agreement on certain sections of the textbooks which are considered minimum requirements for all classes, a unit on the use of the dictionary, and another unit on the use of the library, instructors are free to plan their work as they see fit.

During the first half of the year, considerable attention is paid to paragraph organization and the decencies of writing. A unit on slanted language and charged meaning is recommended for the last six weeks of the semester. Meanwhile, the students are encouraged to use their own experience and observation as material for writing. For the second semester a selection is made among the ingeniously organized problem units in the Sams and McNeir book. Student writing, factual, analytical, and critical, is based on the reading. The course outline for Rhetoric is made by a member of the staff selected for this purpose. He may, if he wishes, ask help from a small committee. The nature of the syllabus is a matter of concern of the entire staff

only insofar as it must be ratified at a general meeting.

On the basis of their percentile scores in the entrance examination, about one hundred of the most poorly prepared students are assigned to what we call Basic sections, each of which we try to limit to twenty students. The reduced size of classes for these "underprivileged" makes possible frequent conferences with instructors and more individual attention generally. A student who is given a passing grade in a Basic section receives full credit for the course, since the reason for putting him in a Basic section in the first place was not to give him less difficult work, graded on a lower scale of competence, but simply to put him in a class in which the full attention of the instructor could be directed toward removing elementary handicaps. I have never heard a student complain of being placed in a Basic section. On the contrary, those of us who have taught Basics have sometimes found that the morale of the students is better than that in other classes. The students are made to understand that their condition is bad, but not hopeless, and they see that a real effort is being made to help them.

At the other end of the scale, students whose percentile score on the entrance examination is above ninety are offered an option of taking an exemption in Rhetoric or Communication and enrolling instead in another course called the Writing Laboratory. There are two sections of this course, each limited to twenty students. Admission to this course is represented as both an honor and a responsibility. The students produce about twice as much writing as is done in a standard class. To a considerable extent, they plan their own work. For example, three or four students in my Writing Laboratory section have obtained my permission to spend most of the rest of the semester experimenting with scripts for

presenting educational material on the college radio. Others are making a semester's job of producing, in somewhat reduced form, a complete issue of some magazine of their choice. Instructors sometimes resent the removal of these bright students from their Standard classes—they never resent the removal of the Basic students—saying that they leave the Standard classes flat and uninspiring. But placed against this objection is what I profoundly believe is a tremendous value to the top students, that of being allowed to compete with and to stimulate each other. I have known instances of nearly whole sections of top students maintaining social contact through their senior year.

Four years ago, on a kind of pilot line basis, we started a course called Communication. Although the legitimacy of the course has been debated rather warmly, at present we have twelve sections enrolling about one-third of our freshman class, and it seems probable that next year more sections will be added. This year the staff has consisted of four people from the English department and three from Speech. Whereas Rhetoric is a three-hour course, Communication carries four hours of credit each semester.

We try to impress on our students the principle that all transmission of meaning is accomplished through the forming of an idea or intention in someone's nervous system, the use of a set of symbols as transmitting instruments, and the impact of these symbols on the consciousness of someone else. The process may be so simple as to be nearly reflex, or it may include the complexities called "feedback" by the cybernetics people. Starting from this principle, we reach the conclusion that whether you are speaking or writing, reading or listening, you are engaged in an activity which is understandable in terms of a single process, and you can improve your effectiveness

in that activity by reference to that process.

Our course in Communication, then, attempts to attack a bigger, but perhaps a more fundamental problem than does the composition course or the speech course. By trying to bring the student to understanding why people express themselves the way they do, we attempt to help him to understand himself and to analyze his own handicaps. By having the student speak and write in the same subject matter areas, we try to demonstrate to him the one-ness of the communication principle while, at the same time, we sharpen his perception of differences in techniques. The ideal of the course is improvement in skill through understanding and practice.

The textbooks for Communication are the *American College Dictionary*; Leary and Smith, *Think Before You Write*; Perrin, *Writer's Guide and Index*; and Bystrom, Paulson and Ramsland, *Communicating through Speech*.

We start the year by having each student introduce another member of the class both orally and in writing, a very simple device to break down the formality of the first week. Every student is given a semester syllabus which contains all reading assignments and a rather detailed description of the content and rationale of each of the three- or four-week units, which deal in various ways with the nature of communication, barriers to communication, the nature of language, and some of the mental processes represented in our use of language. This year, our second semester's work consists of two large units. The first, which we call "Case Studies in Communication," is based on seven or eight excellent tape recordings in the series called "Ways of Mankind," produced through a grant from the Ford Foundation by the National Association of Educational Broadcasters. Each tape presents, from an an-

thropologist's point of view, a dramatization of a problem in culture or ethics. Besides being an excellent exercise in listening, each raises more topics for discussion and writing than we know how to deal with. The second part of the semester will be devoted to a study of mass media, their effects upon us and their importance as representations of American values.

Since the Communication staff consists of only seven people, all of them are actively involved in making the syllabus. Bi-weekly meetings are held in which instructors compare techniques and results, insult and stimulate each other.

All Rhetoric, Communication, and Writing Laboratory students take the same written examinations at the end of the semesters. No instructor grades the examination papers of his own students, but each instructor has sole responsibility for giving his students their marks. In addition to the written examination, Communication students are required to give final speeches.

In our college, we have three supplementary facilities which are available to students who have unusual difficulties in using language: the Writing Clinic, the Reading Clinic, and the Speech Correction Clinic. Unfortunately, these three agencies do not function as part of a single program. The Writing Clinic is a function of the English Department. When an instructor in either Rhetoric or Communication discovers a student whose writing problems are too deep-seated to be remedied by the usual class procedure, he is at liberty to direct the student to the Writing Clinic. There, the instructor in charge works out with him a supplementary program of conferences and activities. No fixed period of confinement in the clinic is established. The student remains there until his regular instructor and the clinician are satis-

fied that either the disease is fatal or the therapy has proved successful.

The Reading Clinic is a function of the Psychology and Education Departments. Students may enter voluntarily or on the insistence of an instructor. A number of freshmen whose reading scores on their entrance examinations are phenomenally low, are required by the college to spend some time in this Clinic. A pattern of exercises and lessons is prescribed for most poor readers; however, a few students whose reading difficulty is derived from emotional maladjustment are given special attention.

Dr. Charles Van Riper achieves notable success in his Speech Correction Clinic with people whose speech difficulties are distinctly abnormal. His methods, partly psychiatric, seem to work miracles with stutterers, aphasics, and people with other extraordinary handicaps. He has, however, neither the time nor the staff to help people with less excruciating problems: the boy with the Bronx dialect; the girl with the high, weak voice; the student whose parents were immigrants. The Speech Correction Clinic is an activity within the Speech Department.

Our most difficult administrative problem has to do with the rise of the course in Communication in areas formerly occupied by Rhetoric in the English Department and Fundamentals of Speech in the Speech Department. It is inevitable that Communication should be regarded by some of our colleagues as an interloper: at best, an over-ambitious effort on the part of some restless idealists; at worst, an attempt to "water down" the content of two good courses in order to conform to an educational fad. We have not done much in the way of comparative testing of students, partly because we haven't had time, partly because we don't know how, and partly because the basic aims of Communication are some-

what different from those of either Rhetoric or Fundamentals of Speech. Fundamentals of Speech has never been an all-college requirement as Rhetoric was before the rise of Communication; therefore, the competition between Communication and Rhetoric is more apparent than that between Communication and the freshman speech course. The only comparative testing we have done has been to have both Communication and Rhetoric students take the same final written examinations. So far, no significant difference in writing ability between the two groups has been observed.

Doubtless, we must settle, as soon as is practicable, the question of what standard language training we shall require of all our students. Having taught all levels of Rhetoric as well as Communication, I am inclined to cast my vote for Communication. I think it is the course most likely to offer the student what he needs. Now, I am going to utter a heresy. I think that training in the use of spoken English is, for most students, more fundamentally important than training in the use of written English. I do not mean to debase the function of composition courses. Some matters of accuracy and precision are learned best when one is trying to write, and occasions for writing are usually more exacting than occasions for speaking. Yet, in general, we write only when we cannot speak, and technology is making it possible for us to speak oftener and be heard farther. Certainly it seems to be true that many Americans read only when it is inconvenient to listen or watch. Therefore, it seems to me that the combining of techniques in the Communication course is more valuable to most students than the traditional segregation of written composition and speaking. Furthermore, a four-hour course gives us, not enough time, but more time than the traditional three-hour course.

However, judging from our experience, I think a college should move cautiously in scrapping traditional courses and establishing a Communication program. Need for special freshman courses in writing and speaking will certainly persist. Perhaps such courses should continue as auxiliaries and supplements to the Communication program. Also, Communication is a hard course to teach—that is, if it is something more than some of the material of two or three other courses pasted together in scrapbook fashion. A good Communication program cannot be offered unless the staff is willing to engage in a fair amount of in-service training, frequent conferences with each other, and some good, hard thinking.

I think we have achieved in the Communication staff a healthier uniformity of purposes and procedures than we have been able to do in the Rhetoric staff, and we have achieved it without making much of a point of it. Probably the reason is that all Communication instructors participate in making the syllabus. Once we have talked our way through to an agreement about what we ought to do, there is little temptation for anyone to depart very far from it.

A constant problem in both Communication courses and traditional courses is maintaining a proper relationship between subject matter content and activities directly concerned with understanding language and becoming proficient in its use. We all agree that a course must contain subject matter. The student must write and speak about *something*; he must read and listen to *something*. The *something* should be as stimulating as possible in order that the student's interest may be caught and his imagination stirred. But when the instructor is also interested and stirred by his subject matter, he is strongly tempted to make "appreciation" of that ma-

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terial the end of the course. Most anthologies of freshman readings, being what they are, have the effect of luring him into this error. He proceeds to lead his students in a solemn and reverent parade through Plato, Einstein, Dean Inge, and Lincoln Steffens because reading of those authors by students is "good for them." The instructor whose chief interest is semantics, linguistic history, or social psychology is just as likely as the teacher with intensive literary training to be side-tracked. And the student emerges with some new ideas or attitudes. But is his command of the instruments of communication more effective than it was before? I am reasonably sure that the true reason for teaching large amounts of prescriptive grammar

in freshman courses is that grammar offers a body of subject matter for the language teacher just as the chart of atomic elements does for the chemistry teacher. He knows it thoroughly—he has even memorized it—; it is not something which he needs to think through every day he meets a class. And he loses sight of the true end of the course, helping students learn to use the language accurately and effectively.

Better communication skill, through understanding and practice, then, is our aim at Western Michigan College. In spite of the somewhat hortatory tone of parts of this report, we have no prescription for anyone else—except to try as hard as we try.

Some Practices in English at the A. and M. College of Texas¹

STEWART S. MORGAN²

I should like to lay before you our whole program in English at the Agricultural and Mechanical College of Texas, a program in which we do our best to combine the teaching of writing skills with the teaching of humanized knowledge. The whole program, of course, there is not time for. But there seems to be time for a short account of three matters—an overall plan for the education of superior students and two practices that we have found helpful in our freshman courses in composition.

At the beginning of the fall semester, our Basic Division administers a battery of tests to the entering freshmen and locates about one hundred and twenty stu-

dents who show very low scores in English and about one hundred who show top scores, not just in English but in all of the capacities tested. The weak students we place in a pre-college course and do what we can for them. (Incidentally, some energetic teachers in the department have been performing some experiments in the teaching of students deficient in English and have shown most gratifying results.) The strong students we place in special sections and give them what might be called a condensed version of both semesters of our regular freshman English.

These students, please remember, are picked for over-all superiority and, as far as administrators of tests can predict, are the most promising students in the College. They are usually superior in English, but if they are not, they are transferred to regular sections as soon as the

¹ Part of a paper read at the Spring Meeting of the Conference on College Composition and Communication, March 13, 1953, Chicago, Illinois.

² The Agricultural and Mechanical College of Texas.

English teacher spots them.

At the end of the fall semester—that is, at midyear—they are through with freshman composition, but we do not (and here we differ from somewhat similar practices in other colleges) forgive them the requirement of a second semester of English. To satisfy the requirement of a second semester of English in the freshman year, they must elect a course in literature, and all of our literature courses are available to them. Most of them take Shakespeare, some take Great Books, and the rest find places in three or four other courses. While this privilege of free election of courses is intended mainly for students who graduate from the star sections, we do extend the privilege to others in our regular sections of freshman English who do distinguished work and are recommended by their teachers. We find, incidentally, that these second-semester freshmen hold their own with upperclassmen in the literature courses.

In the sophomore year, in place of the more pedestrian courses that we have built for those who need to be kept at their work in composition while studying literature, these superior students may again elect advanced courses in literature. The result of this part of the plan is that these excellent students, most of whom are majoring in technical subjects, will graduate with about three courses in literature in addition to one in composition and one in speech.

In the sophomore year, we offer these superior students still another inducement to combine technical education with education in the humanities. To them we offer degree plans that will enable them in five years, not four, to complete the requirements in technology for the degree of B.S. and the requirements in English for the degree of B.A. For example, a student may choose mechanical engineering for a profession. Repre-

sentatives of the departments of mechanical engineering and English, in conference with the student, merge the curricula in mechanical engineering and English and create a program that will enable the student to get the B. S. in mechanical engineering and the B.A. in English at the end of five years. We have worked out such combinations for electrical engineering and English, petroleum engineering and English, aeronautical engineering and English, business administration and English, genetics and English, animal husbandry and English, and agronomy and English. We expect to have similar combinations for students of other technical majors. Our hopes are high that students who have finished the two degrees will be set on their way toward becoming not just technologists but toward becoming educated men who are also technologists. Naturally we do not have many students heading for the two degrees. We shall be happy if we can add to the program a handful of students each year.

A note of interest is that when we proposed the plan of two degrees, Professor C. W. Crawford of mechanical engineering sent to a long list of industrialists who employ our graduates a questionnaire asking for opinions about the plan. The answers indicated that the industrialists strongly favored the plan. One question in the list asked whether the industrialists would prefer their employees to have a five-year program in which the student could finish both the B.S. and the M.S. degrees or a five-year program in which he could finish the B.S. and the B.A. A substantial majority favored the five-year plan for the B.S. and the B.A.

Now to our composition courses and work-a-day matters that we think are useful. First the bulletins. For each of our courses with many sections we prepare each year printed bulletins address-

ed to the students. These bulletins tell the students what work they shall be expected to do, how it is to be done, and why it should be done. Each bulletin is a course syllabus and more.

For example, the bulletin for our first course in freshman English (like bulletins for all multiple-sectioned courses in this respect) opens with an explanation of the student's whole program of English courses and shows him how the aim of this specific semester's work fits into the whole. Then the bulletin takes up, part by part, that semester's work. Here is the table of contents for the bulletin in our first course in freshman English. It will show in a moment the subjects discussed.

- I Your Program for English in the Freshman and Sophomore Years
- II Texts and Materials for English 103
- III Subject Matter
 - A. Language Study
 - B. Reading
 - C. Writing
- IV Quantity of Composition Work
- V The Grading of Compositions
- VI Popular Fallacies About Grades
- VII Conferences With Teachers
- VIII Outside Reading
- IX Quizzes and the Examination

We find that both teachers and students like the bulletins. There are no instructions about the course for the teachers not included in the bulletins. Knowing this, the students have the confidence that all of them in the course will have a like amount of work to do and that the aims for all sections will be similar if not the same. The teachers, especially the younger ones, are grateful for the specific list of duties and objectives.

So much for the bulletins. The third matter that I wish to explain is our plan for the reciprocal reading of the final examination in the freshman courses. But

first I must say something about the kind of writing we assign to let you understand our examination.

For the most part, the student papers throughout freshman English are discussions suggested by the readings. The student does not write about the essays themselves (except in certain exercises in reading comprehension) but about subjects arising out of the readings or the class discussions of them. The actual reviewing of pieces of non-fiction he does at some length in the second semester of the freshman year, when reviewing is taught in connection with investigative writing. In the first course and partly in the second, the student (with the instructor's help, to be sure) finds a subject which will combine his reading with his experience. For example, if an article read for class deals with an interesting character, the student will imitate the professional writer by characterizing a person of his own acquaintance. If the reading deals with, say, a labor problem, the student may write an account of a labor situation that he has some knowledge of. Above all, our assignments steer clear of those trivial compositions about a picnic on the river or the benefits of football.

To avoid trivial subjects for student papers we think is imperative. We have evidence to suppose that it is the difference in difficulty in theme assignments made by various instructors rather than differences in evaluating the writing itself which give rise to the notion that grading standards vary widely among college English teachers. And we are convinced that when assignments are of a respectable degree of difficulty and all that has led up to the assignments is understood, English teachers will agree closely on the grades. We have more than a little support for that observation in the scheme we employ for the reading of final examinations, which in both se-

mesters of the freshman year are entirely writing. Selecting topics from given lists, the student composes three separate paragraphs each explaining ideas he has met in his readings and follows these paragraphs with a composition of four to five hundred words on a subject of current interest that may or may not arise out of his readings.

So much for the nature of the examination. Now for our way of reading the students' examinations. After the examination papers are in, each teacher stacks his papers on a large table. Then, from each of the stacks of his fellow teachers he takes a few papers until he has as many as he brought in. These he grades and returns to the original teachers, who then read the papers of their own students. If a teacher agrees with the grade already on the paper, that is the student's examination grade. If he does not agree, he may not change the grade, but he must turn it in to be read by a panel of two other teachers. The panel grade he must accept. Though this is not in the plan, sometimes a teacher sends to panel a paper with a grade he accepts just to get confirmation for a borderline case.

As we hoped, the grading scheme resulted in something of an equalizing of grading standards, and with that came a better spirit among the students, who no longer came in to report that Teacher X was unfair in his grading and that Teacher Y was fair.

The scheme places added work on us. Nevertheless, in three votes taken in different semesters, the plan carried with only a few of the staff dissenting. And

even the dissenters concede these advantages: First it tends to stiffen the assignments made by all teachers throughout the semester. Second, because it seems to equalize the difficulty of assignments made by all of us, the students do not complain about difficult assignments. Third, it lessens from instructor to instructor the spread of percentages of grades, and this without raising the proportion of failures. (Perhaps the faint-hearted are given courage and the tartars are softened.) Fourth, it gives each teacher an opportunity to compare his own judgments with the judgments of others. Fifth, it provides for the students the satisfaction of knowing that their papers will receive an impersonal and careful reading. Above all, we feel that the plan has elicited from every one of us better teaching and more conscientious work with students.

As I said before, the teachers like the plan well enough to have voted in favor of it in three different years. And now we find that in summer terms when we do not require reciprocal reading of examinations, the few teachers with freshman sections invariably get together to swap papers.

These are a few things we do that we think are good. But they do not deceive us into believing that the humanities are getting the attention they deserve in the education of the student at our college. Though we are enthusiastic about certain parts of our English program, when we are in a confessing mood we admit sadly that we do not know how to teach our students to read with comprehension or to write competently.

A Method of Conducting the Technical Writing Course

WARREN B. BEZANSON¹

Instructors of English sometimes face with understandable diffidence the prospect of teaching technical writing to engineering students. Educated in the humanities, they regard themselves as unqualified to cope with the subject matter of the compositions submitted by their students. Yet this difficulty may be overcome simply and effectively. At the beginning of the course, every member of the class selects a topic in which he is genuinely interested. Throughout the semester, he is assigned papers of increasing complexity and scope which deal with various aspects of his topic. Under this plan, the instructor will be able, by the end of the term, to comprehend material which would have been relatively meaningless to him at the first class meeting. Through class discussions and conferences with individual students he will have developed a consciousness of and interest in the problems which beset the technical writer.

At the University of Maryland, where the writer of this article has been teaching technical writing for the past six years, the class in this subject meets for two hours each week during the semester. The majority of students taking the course are juniors and seniors in the College of Engineering, although no attempt is made to limit enrollment to that group alone. Virtually every member of the class thus has a background of experience in the form of field trips, laboratory work, or summer employment from which to draw ideas for writing.

Within the first two weeks of the semester, each student, after conference

with the instructor and a general class discussion, selects a subject of particular interest to himself which he can write about from personal observation. (The course is concerned primarily with the techniques of expository writing rather than with the methods of scholarly research, although instruction is given in the use and acknowledgment of sources.) The topic chosen must not be too broad for treatment in a single long report, yet it must be comprehensive enough to permit division into a number of short compositions each of which develops a single type of exposition. The introductory lecture by the instructor, discussion by the class of the expository technique under consideration, and completion of the corresponding written assignment encompass three class sessions. After the first set of papers has been graded, the third meeting in every sequence of three is used by the instructor for general criticism and evaluation of papers submitted the previous week, as well as for the presentation of the next unit of work; at the subsequent meeting, students may ask for clarification of the instructor's comments on their individual assignments. The corrected first paper is handed in with the third assignment, the corrected second paper with the fourth assignment, and so on throughout the semester. No grade is final until the student has satisfactorily revised his work. From time to time this routine is varied by having the writing, or a portion of it, done in the classroom under the instructor's supervision.

During the two-week period when students are deciding upon their topics for exposition, they are asked to examine

¹ University of Maryland

publications in their fields of interest for usage in style and mechanics. Two class meetings are spent in discussing these matters. After individual projects have been approved, a series of expository compositions is assigned at the rate of one per week, in the following order: an abstract of a periodical article or chapter of a book dealing with some phase of the student's interest; classificatory and analytical papers, on themes included in the student's general topic, which involve the development of outlines and the use of headings in the body of a completed paper; an expanded definition of a term to be used frequently or to be understood within a particular context; description of a mechanism and of a process referred to in the student's project; a set of directions for operating the mechanism or for performing the process; and a "popular science" article on some aspect of the student's work. Each of the later papers is to be directed to a particular reader, with the aim of writing for several levels of comprehension. On some assignments, the instructor nominates the potential reader; on others, the student himself fixes the reading level of his exposition; in either case the burden of proof is on the writer of the paper, and his degree of success is a matter for class discussion. The remainder of the semester is devoted to the completion of the students' major papers, which may be periodic reports, progress reports, examination reports, or recommendation reports on the topics originally chosen by individual members of the class.

A student in the technical writing class during the fall semester decides to write about a route survey in which he participated the previous summer. He abstracts an article on obtaining accurate horizontal measurements. His classificatory and analytical papers deal with various surveying instruments. He writes an

expanded definition of the term "wiggling in." The mechanism which he chooses to describe is a dumpy level; the process, differential leveling. Since he is free to utilize either of these last two topics for his next paper, he elects to compose a set of directions for executing the process rather than for using the mechanism. Each of these papers is directed to a different reader. Asked to write an article in the style of the *Reader's Digest*, he submits a paper entitled "The Engineer's Level Makes Your Life Easier." His final long paper is a report intended for presentation to the University of Maryland student chapter of the American Society of Civil Engineers, on the route survey for a high tension transmission line on which he was employed.

Since the student has had ample opportunity throughout the semester to demonstrate his skill in writing, the final examination is designed to measure his ability to recognize and appreciate the various techniques which he has used in his course papers. Therefore it consists of a series of analytical questions concerning a passage on a scientific or technical subject: its chief purpose, its scope and the author's procedure, the main points made in the article (leading to and including the writing of an abstract), methods of acknowledging the passage as a source of information, the nature of the prose of the passage, and an estimate as to its effectiveness in communicating ideas to the reader for whom it was apparently intended. The questions used in this examination have, over a period of several years, become relatively standardized, but the choice of material to be analyzed is virtually unlimited.

The techniques described in this article need not depend upon the use of a particular textbook on expository writing; they may be adapted to any publication which an instructor prefers. The

course might also be expanded to include other assignments than those listed above. The plan, as the writer has developed it, has the advantages of giving a continuity to the technical writing course which is beneficial to instructor and student alike. It acquaints the for-

mer with the students' fields of interest so that he can criticize their written work more intelligently; it permits the latter to concentrate on a topic of importance to himself while he learns to differentiate between reader-groups and to express his ideas clearly and effectively.

Freshman Texts in the Light of Linguistics - A Panel Discussion¹

FRANCIS CHRISTENSEN,² RECORDER

A publisher's representative at the CCCC luncheon meeting at Los Angeles must have felt, from the large attendance, that English teachers are not too happy with the textbooks his firm has provided. What specific suggestions for revision he might have sent to the home office after hearing the panel I won't speculate on. The discussion of "Freshman Texts in the Light of Linguistics" was not as conclusive as he might have wished. The annual business meeting and the time required by the Statler to convert the Sierra Room from auditorium to banquet room and back again cut into the time of the panel, so that the fourth speaker, Paul Roberts (San Jose State College) did not get to speak,³ and there was no time for discussion. Consequently there was no accommodation of views, no consensus.

I

The four members of the panel were two linguists, Harold Allen (Minnesota) and Paul Roberts, placed strategically first and last; a philologist, to use his own term, William Matthews (UCLA); and L. M. Myers (Arizona State College, Tempe). Mr. Allen and Mr. Roberts have

both written texts, though not handbooks, for freshman English, and Mr. Myers has written a grammar (*American English: A Twentieth Century Grammar*) which might be used in a freshman course. Mr. Matthews, on the other hand, although he has written on the history of the language, has written no freshman text and has not had for many years the "uneasy experience" of teaching the freshman course and so he chose for himself the role of the impartial outsider.

By accident or design the field of "freshman texts" narrowed itself down to handbooks, and the discussion centered on two chapters—those on "usage" and on "grammar." In this report I will keep the two topics separate.

II

The chairman, Mr. C. V. Wicker (New Mexico), introduced the topic as the continuation of a discussion at the Boston meeting. Mr. Allen took it farther back, tying it to the question raised over twenty years ago in the NCTE of the "proper basis for a desirable standard of usage." In the *English Journal* for September, 1935, he examined some of the texts then on the market and found them all at variance with established facts of linguistic usage. For this discussion he had made a similar analysis of twelve handbooks now on the market, all but one dated 1950

¹ At the CCCC Luncheon Meeting, Los Angeles, California, November 27, 1953.

² University of Southern California.

³ Mr. Roberts' paper, prepared for this occasion, is given in this issue of *College Composition and Communication*, pages 20-22.

or later, and that one 1949—all published, that is, at least ten years since the first appearance of Perrin's *Index* (1939) and all since John S. Kenyon's key article "Cultural Levels and Functional Varieties of English," which appeared in *College English* in October, 1948. He examined them for their statements on nine items of usage and for their treatment of the nature and structure of the sentence. Since his paper will be published elsewhere,⁴ I will give only the briefest summary of his conclusions: None of the handbooks consistently recommends the usages recognized by our dictionaries or established by such studies of usage as Leonard's, and of course in their eclecticism they do not agree with one another; but, compared with those of twenty years ago, they are fairly good—about B minus compared with D plus.

Mr. Myers had little to say about usage; he seemed to feel that the deficiencies of the older books had been made good. Mr. Matthews had raided his colleagues' bookshelves, taking some handbooks as much as fifteen years old, for a study like Mr. Allen's, and he found much the same state of affairs. But he viewed it with much less satisfaction. He thought it a little pathetic to see the conservatives, the Old Guard, thoroughly intimidated, trying to maintain "sound standards," but quoting from Leonard for fear of seeming reactionary. Linguists are not God. If the textbook writers are too brief and dogmatic in discussing usages (Mr. Matthews prefers the plural term), linguists too are subject to the occupational disease of all specialists, that of becoming doctrinaire. There is danger in drawing a line between linguists and other people. The linguist proceeds scientifically and develops more systematic information and a greater variety of means of analysis; but as a

scientist he is not on the same footing as a physicist or a chemist, who discovers things other people don't know at all. All of us who speak and write English are observers of language, its structure and usages; any good literary man is likely to have as good "operative" knowledge of the language as the linguist. Moreover, since there is variety in usages, there is bound to be variety in opinions about usages. Writers of texts for freshmen should keep informed on what linguists have observed about language, but it is another matter to expect them to make the same recommendations as Pooley and Leonard. Mr. Matthews was brought up on the Fowlers' books, and still prefers someone who assumes the right to express his own opinion or invites his reader to form his own.

Mr. Roberts was as little pleased as Mr. Matthews with what the writers of handbooks have done to accommodate themselves to the principle of usage. But not because they have surrendered their right to judgment—"they have just been too eager to please."

III

Mr. Allen turned to the chapter on grammar with his last item, the nature and structure of the sentence. Only two of the twelve handbooks postdate Fries's *The Structure of English*, so that there was no real chance for any of them to profit by that book. But even though structural analysis is the latest advance in linguistic science, enough books and articles have accumulated to have reached the writers of textbooks. Mr. Allen could find no evidence that they had. In grammar the textbooks of today show the same cultural lag as those of twenty years ago showed in usage. Here is the next place for improvement.

Mr. Matthews also found no evidence of recent structural studies, but he did find "some reflection of the phonetic approach toward the definition of the sen-

⁴ Mr. Allen's paper is published in this issue of *College Composition and Communication*, pages 16-19.

tence." He feels, however, that the time lag is inevitable, and he is not sure that structural linguistics has yet demonstrated its value, since the structuralists themselves are divided and they have not tackled the pedagogical problem. But the change will come; in the graduate schools the text book writers of the future are getting their indoctrination.

This prospect had no charms for Mr. Myers. It seems to him a dubious sort of progress to throw off the grasp of the metaphysicians only to fall into that of the linguisticians. Their studies of the structure of the language have all been at a high level that has made them unadaptable to general use. The time to teach grammar is at the age of eleven or twelve, and the way Mr. Myers sees

is to adapt the traditional grammar to the English language. Donatus produced a good teaching grammar, but it must be freed of metaphysics and organized for progressive use in the schools.

Mr. Roberts would have taken issue with both Mr. Matthews and Mr. Myers on the pedagogical problem—"I have found it relatively easy to teach structural analysis to grade school children, somewhat harder to teach it to college juniors, and nearly impossible to teach it to professors of English." Why this difference? The greater part of the paper he had prepared was an explanation of why the writers of textbooks, all professors of English, and men neither unintelligent nor venal, had not done better and would not themselves do better.

Freshman Textbooks in the Light of Linguistics¹

HAROLD B. ALLEN²

Some twenty years ago the pages of the old college edition of the *English Journal* were warmed by a controversy over an old issue, "What is the basis for a desirable standard of usage?" One writer took for granted that the existing freshman handbooks accurately represented the usage of the day. As an aftermath of that controversy I was asked to prepare an article in which that assumption would be tested. The article appeared in the September, 1935, issue of the college edition of the *Journal*. It offered evidence taken from an examination of a number of specific usage items in a number of current textbooks. From the evidence the only possible conclusion

was given as: "The books to which thousands of freshmen are referred are still all too frequently at variance with the established facts of linguistic usage."

In these twenty years workers in the field of linguistics have gone far in two directions significant to their colleagues in freshman English. One direction is toward acquiring better information about usage; the other is toward a better description of the nature, of the structure, of our language. These advances raise the questions, "How far behind the linguists are the writers of freshman textbooks today? How well have the textbook writers utilized the new resources of fact and interpretation opened to them by the students of language?"

In trying to answer that question I have examined certain selected matters in twelve representative textbooks named

¹ This talk opened the panel discussion at the CCCC luncheon in Los Angeles, November 27, 1953.

² University of Minnesota

on the list.³ All except one of these books have appeared since 1950; only one is as old as 1949. The time limitation was intentional, for I did not think it fair to include books published prior to the publication of what many consider to be the best statement on usage yet made, Professor John S. Kenyon's article, "Cultural Levels and Functional Varieties of English," in *College English* for October, 1948.

Now to the authors of these books what new information, what new views of usage, had been made available since 1935? Well, for interpretation, for usage theory, the most important was the article by Kenyon just mentioned. But *American Speech*, *College English*, and other journals had also printed many articles on specific items. In *American Speech*, for instance, appeared Kenyon's "Will" of Inanimate Volition" (February, 1948), Marckwardt's "Want with Ellipsis of Verbs of Motion" (February, 1948), Dwight Bolinger's "Analogical Correlatives of 'Than'" (October, 1946), and Esther Sheldon's "Rise of the Incomplete Comparative" (October, 1945). In *College English* I think of Gladys Haase's "Like For" (October, 1950), Adeline C. Bartlett's "The Case of the

Noun or Pronoun with the Gerund" (May, 1950), Francis Christensen's "In Defense of the Absolute" (April, 1950), Margaret Bryant's "Person . . . Their" (March, 1950), and Russell Thomas's "Reason is Because" (December, 1948).

Besides the second edition of the *New International* they had available the derivative *New Collegiate*, the *American College Dictionary*, and, since 1951, the Thorndike-Barnhart *Comprehensive Desk Dictionary*—all of them fairly sensitive to changes in usage.

They had the Marckwardt-Walcott study, *Facts About Current English Usage*, in 1938, Fries's important *American English Grammar* in 1940, and the *Linguistic Atlas of New England*. As teachers they had available Robert Pooler's *Teaching English Usage* in 1946, Marckwardt's *Introduction to the English Language* in 1942; and as textbook writers they had the example set by Perrin's *Index to English* in 1939.

Now to see how textbook writers used the new material and new ideas I made a spot check of ten representative forms.

First I looked at the book's general presentation of usage differences. Only three of the twelve clearly reflected the concept of functional usage variations as so significantly set forth by Kenyon. The rest clung to the older classification by levels, though with the recognition that levels do merge into one another and that "colloquial" refers to generally acceptable English. Only one book persists in using "colloquial" as a smear word.

Second, I looked at the problem of concord as illustrated in the agreement of verb or pronoun with the indefinites *everyone*, *everybody*, and so on. In marked contrast with the attitude twenty years ago five of the twelve cheerfully report plural concord in informal English, six admit it somewhat grudgingly, and only one still hews to the imaginary line by

³ Birk and Birk, *Understanding and Using English*, Odyssey, 1951.

Dean, *Effective Communication*, Prentice-Hall, 1953.

Foerster and Steadman (rev. by MacMillan), *Writing and Thinking*, Houghton, Mifflin, 1952.

Gorrell and Laird, *Modern English Handbook*, Prentice-Hall, 1953.

Hodges, *Harbrace Handbook*, Harcourt, Brace, 1951.

Leggett, Mead, and Charvat, *Prentice-Hall Handbook*, Prentice-Hall, 1951.

Newsome and Borgh, *Sentence Craft*, Macmillan, 1952.

Perrin, *Writer's Guide and Index to English*, Scott, Foresman, 1950.

Warfel, Mathews, and Bushman, *American College English*, American Book, 1949.

Watt, *An American Rhetoric*, Rinehart, 1952.

Woolley, Scott, and Bracher, *College Handbook of Composition*, Heath, 1951.

Wykoff and Shaw, *Harper Handbook*, Harper, 1952.

ignoring informal use altogether and demanding the singular.

Third is the form of the modifier of a gerund, that is, whether it should have the genitive form or whether it can rely upon position alone as the structural signal of its modification. Eight of the twelve books recognize the growing use of the uninflected modifier, one author realistically saying that the possessive form is falling into disuse. But four books insist that the "best" usage still requires the possessive case form.

Fourth is the problem of idiom, as illustrated by *different than*. Most of the books simply call this informal and indicate that it is on the increase. One calls it questionable, but in the same paragraph frankly tells the student that the usage is defended by Pooley and listed without comment in the *ACD*. Only two flatly condemn it.

Fifth and sixth are matters of functional change, one of a structural signal and one of a word with full meaning. The structural signal is *like*, now widely found as a conjunction. One author intelligently comments that although *like* should be used in this way with caution, "it obviously is on its way to becoming generally accepted and is a good instance of change in usage, one that we can observe as it takes place." Three call it informal, four call it colloquial; but three more do dogmatically assert, "It should not be used."

The other functional shift is of the word *contact*, one of the curious shibboleths of our profession. It seems that if you meticulously use *contact* only as a noun, you're socially acceptable. But if you use it as a verb, then, according to some of these books, you are a "low" person engaged in "trade," "the business world," "commerce," or, *horrible dictu*, "high pressure salesmanship." I have not yet called this unhappy state of affairs to the attention of the president of the

University of Minnesota, who thus used *contact* in a letter to the faculty three years ago. Nor do I intend to! As a matter of fact, most of the textbooks examined consider this use colloquial or informal. One states: "Actually the verb is widely used by careful speakers and writers in the business world, especially when the user can't or doesn't want to cite a specific means of communication." Only three books flatly condemn this use.

Seventh is semantic shift, as evidenced in the use of *between* for more than two. The attempt to insist upon the etymological meaning, says one book, "has failed." Another declares that the rule has "never been faithfully followed." Only two of the twelve persist in the kind of statement common in 1934, that "*between* refers to only two."

Eighth is the problem of foreign plurals, as exemplified in the singular use of *data*. This collective use was generally condemned in nearly all the books a few years ago. Now, however, it is accepted in all but two of these twelve texts.

Ninth is the problem of regional use, illustrated by an expression with regional distribution, *all the farther*. Files of the Linguistic Atlas at Michigan and my own collections for the Linguistic Atlas of the Upper Midwest show this to be a common idiomatic locution in Northern American English, even though one of these books does call it "unidiomatic," another "uncultivated colloquial," two others "nonstandard," and one "mistaken." Only one simply recognizes it as colloquial. Since this happens to be my own colloquial expression, this is all the farther I am going at the moment with *all the farther*—and with usage.

For I want to take a minute to consider the other kind of resource available in linguistics, the new studies of the nature or the structure of the language. We know that our past analysis has been derived from that of the classical lan-

guages and that it doesn't work very well. I should assume that students can learn to work better with sentences if they know something of their structure. It would seem reasonable that if linguistics can contribute help, then that help should be accepted.

Now the study of language structure is probably the most significant recent development in linguistics. Since the thirties numerous articles, mostly in *Language* but some also in *Word, Studies in Linguistics*, and other journals, have provided new insights into English structure. George Trager, Bernard Bloch, Eugene Nida, Richard Pittman, Rulon Wells, and Kenneth Pike are important names here. Pike opened a whole new world for the study of sentence relationships with his book *The Intonation of American English*. And last year, of course, though too late to affect most of the books here examined, Charles C. Fries's *The Structure of English* appeared.

Much of this is so recent that it would be unreasonable to expect it to be reflected in the current crop of textbooks. But I should not expect, though, still to find insistence upon the definition of a sentence as the expression of a complete thought. Yet actually three of these books do offer precisely that definition, without at the same time even hinting to the student how he can tell when a thought is complete. Several other books, while saying much about sentences, successfully manage to avoid defining a sentence. Two realistic books say that a sentence is a grammatically independent group of words but do not tell the basis of that independence. A third goes further to say that its independence is determined by relation to other clauses,

length and rhythm, and the subject matter. A fourth offers examples but fails to go on to form and pitch. Not a single one recognizes the basic internal modification structure of the English sentence as being composed of layers; not one considers its basic formal characteristics in terms of function words, position potentials, and intonation patterns. Yet they all denounce the comma splice and sentence fragment without providing the clear understanding which would more readily help the student to avoid them.

Now in brief summary: From the point of view of linguistics this representative group of freshman textbooks is fair to good in the field of usage, certainly much more reliable than the corresponding group studied twenty years ago. Although the cultural lag is still with us, the gap between reality and the description of reality is now much narrower. But with respect to description of the structure of the language the books certainly provide much misleading information, more likely to cause trouble than to remove it. Here is where the greatest need and opportunity for improvement exist.

Finally, then, I should like to suggest this central question for discussion. If it is good to have textbooks draw more heavily upon linguistic knowledge, how can progress toward that goal be speeded up?

With respect to the publishers?

With respect to future textbook authors?

With respect to the instructors who adopt the books?

With respect to the present and future crop of graduate students who will sooner or later be instructors with a voice in textbook selection?

Freshman Texts in the Light of Linguistics¹

PAUL M. ROBERTS²

When I was invited to speak to this group, I sensed an expectation that I would use the occasion to blast the writers of textbooks. I hope no one will be disappointed if I decline to do this. I prefer rather to use my time in defense of textbook writers, at least to the extent of discussing the pressures on them to write as they do.

Now I cannot deny that there are several respects—two in particular—in which most current handbooks fail to reflect current thought in linguistics. One is their presentation of "grammar" and the other is their treatment of "usage." Nearly all freshman texts in print cling to superstitious notions about grammar that have been thoroughly discredited by the specialists. In such matters as sentence analysis, definition of word classes, parsing, diagraming, and so on, our textbooks have not proceeded beyond the mark set by Lindley Murray in 1795. In this area they wander in folklore, hashing up nonsense that has in it no pertinence to the English language, no value in teaching punctuation and sentence structure, and certainly no intellectual satisfaction. The experts—Bloch, Hoenigswald, Fries, Bloomfield, Trager, Pike, Harris, and many others—speak with one voice in this matter, and I see no possibility of controverting their arguments. I will therefore concede that freshman texts are weak in this area.

They are weak also in their presentation of usage. Here, *perhaps*, they have been just too eager to please. Two dec-

ades ago the "liberalization" movement reached its peak in the works of Leonard and others, and we witnessed a great crusade to make the world safe for "It is me" and "Who are you going with?" Current texts reflect this movement strongly, but they also reflect a gross misunderstanding of what is at stake. Writers feel that they have been liberal enough for anybody when they say that there is not one standard but two or three, or when they "permit" the student to say "Everyone raised their hand," or when they declare that "*what* we say is more important than *how* we say it." But linguistic science supports them in none of this. Linguistics says simply that correctness is relative, changing with many variables in the non-linguistic environment. It is not true that it is "all right" to say, "Everyone raised their hand." Sometimes it is and sometimes it isn't. It is not true that it is better to be a liberal than a purist. Some people, in some circumstances, find it of great practical importance to shun "Aren't you coming back?" in favor of "Shall you not return?"

The failure of textbook writers here is that they have made a naive response to a complicated problem. The concept of relativity of correctness is a revolutionary concept, and the textbooks have tried to meet it with minor adjustments. They have simply slipped the handcuffs a little lower down. They have not given up prescription; they have continued to be prescriptive but in a much more complicated way. And they have in general failed to give any help or consolation to the student whose linguistic needs they propose to serve.

¹ The concluding paper for the panel discussion, "Freshman Texts in the Light of Linguistics," CCCC Luncheon Meeting, Los Angeles, California, November 27, 1953.

² San Jose State College, San Jose, California.

But my purpose today is not to make the obvious point that most freshman texts are mostly useless. Neither do I intend to castigate their authors for writing useless books. Rather I wish to explain, if I can, why they have not done better and why we can expect no major improvement in the near future.

In the first place, I think we must altogether reject the explanation, sometimes given, that the authors of freshman texts are, as a class, weak in understanding. I will not deny that they lend plausibility to such an explanation when they solemnly inform the student that "an interrogative sentence is a sentence that asks a question" or that "a verb is a word that expresses action, being, or state of being." But when we observe that these men are nearly all of them acknowledged leaders in education and that many of them have to their credit outstanding intellectual accomplishments in other fields, we must surely acquit them of stupidity.

The real barrier, I believe, between them and linguistic reality is that, being products of the traditional system, they have acquired a vested interest in that system. I do not mean here to accuse them of venality, though it may be that in scattered individuals concern for royalties is predominant. It is undeniable that publishing empires and personal affluence have been built on the proposition that a verb is a word that expresses action, being, or state of being. But most of the men I know in this business are men of integrity, and I do not believe that their rejection of linguistic science is cynical, motivated by a desire to keep up payments on the washing machine. I think rather that they have simply been unable to face the fact that the lore they learned in junior high school was mythology, without relevance to objective reality.

This is really a staggering fact to face.

If a child puts in several years studying English grammar, and, unlike most of his fellows, learns to manipulate it successfully, he wants to feel that he's got something. He wants to think that this little minuet he has learned to dance is accompanied by the music of the spheres, and if someone tells him that it isn't, that it's just a pointless tribal custom, he becomes frightened and affronted. He closes his mind to rational discussion, frantically embraces any kind of controverting argument, imagines all sorts of peculiar virtues in the traditional practice, and sometimes grows panicky enough to rush into print with the message that if we want to preserve civilization we'd better get rid of these radical fellows and return to the good old horse sense of good old H. W. Fowler.

It is a pitiful spectacle, often a terrifying one. But what I wish to insist on today is that it is wholly understandable and forgivable. I have heard it said lately that the kind of sentence analysis/linguistic science has proposed may be all right for graduate students but is much too hard for youngsters. Something like the opposite is true. I have found it relatively easy to teach structural analysis to grade school children, somewhat harder to teach it to college juniors, and nearly impossible to teach it to professors of English. The professor has too much at stake. Rather than entertain the thought that what he has held all his life to be a clear and important truth may be a meaningless illusion, he closes his mind as tight as he can. And who can blame him? At fifty a man ought to be able to feel that all his important thinking is behind him.

It is ironic that some of the people most seriously alarmed today about the advances of linguistic science are the Young Turks of the thirties, who chorused after Sterling Andrus Leonard and toasted a victory over the corpse of "It

is I." It was a pleasant little revolution, a gentlemanly one, and it never occurred to anyone that the linguists really meant what they said.

There's a big revolution coming along now, and someday writers of textbooks will have to cope with it, will have to figure out what to do with the ugly information linguistic science is giving them. But we certainly can't blame them

for looking the other way as long as they can. Many times in the past our civilization has been confronted with unpleasant intelligence: that the world is round, that the sun does not revolve around the earth, that there may be some connection between men and apes, that the blood circulates in the body. All of these have taken a little getting used to.

Help for Freshmen, or Words to Avoid the Use of

BERENICE THORPE¹

At the first meeting of the class or during the first week at least I pass on to every writing class, beginning or advanced, the following Helps. Sometimes I call it Style Sheet; sometimes I call it Words to Avoid the Use of. I write it on the board; they write it into their notebooks. I tell them they don't even have to know why; they'll be better writers if they don't use these words:

and

is, was, are, were

so

this

you

just, quite, very, really, never, always,
seems

The word *which*, which used to appear on the list, seems to have been lost somewhere in high school; it occurs infrequently these days, thanks perhaps to Mr. Thurber.

After the first papers come in, I point out the over-use of *and* and discuss excessive coordination and the art of subordination. I count aloud for them as many as fifteen or twenty or thirty *is's* and *was's* in a theme of two or three pages, frequently a dozen to a one-page

theme; I discuss the power and movement of good verbs and verbals. So, the most used and most inexact connective in both spoken and written English, by freshmen anyway, comes in for some cute ribbing: So I *sez* to him; I was so mad; it rained so the game was called off. As for *this*, I annoy by insisting on a noun for the adjective *this* to modify, or if *this* is a pronoun I ask to see its antecedent; thus the thought is followed through, becomes more exact. You preaches or it gets mixed up with *I*, *he*, or *we*; we head into a discussion of point of view, of attitude and appropriateness. The other words have been used so much that they have lost their meaning almost; the same goes for *interesting*, an old worn-out word which can hardly be expected to apply with exactness to every big or little adventure or idea in the human experience. *Never* and *always*, tremendous superlatives, cannot often be logically used; *seems* is wishy-washy.

For good measure, upon second reading of themes, we add to our style sheet, as something to avoid the use of, the dash, the lazy man's way to punctuate. (School girls writing home to mamma or to bosom friends may, however, use the dash to denote the rush, the breathless

¹ University of Washington

excitement of their busy lives. In Freshman English, needless to say, we hate to be labeled silly schoolgirls.)

I wish I could report a splendid success for this simple style sheet; it looks good in the notebooks or pinned over a desk, and it often works. But I find myself handing it out to juniors, seniors, and

graduate students who show up in advanced writing classes (biographical, informational, report or opinion writing, scholarly or technical writing). It is my motto; I love it; it makes a fine approach in the first weeks and a fine reminder in the final weeks; and I declare it often works.

An Investigation of Characteristics of Poor Writers¹

WILLIAM D. BAKER²

The aim of this study is to seek to find answers to the following questions:

1. How are poor college writers as a group different from other college writers in respect to high school writing training, attitude toward writing, interests and habits, and college orientation test scores? (Previous studies have shown that between 80 and 90 percent of the students who enroll in the remedial writing course are men. A report by Lewis B. Mayhew, Robert A. Jackson, and Walker H. Hill, "Some Characteristics of Michigan State College Students," *Basic College Newsletter* [May, 1952], provides the following information about Michigan State College students: 42.5% are women, 95% are in the upper two-thirds of their high school classes, 60% are in the upper third; they represent "in the opinion of their high school teachers the better-than-average product of Michigan Schools"; Michigan State College students are about average with respect to academic aptitude [measured by psychological and reading tests] as compared with students from other comparable institutions.")

2. Is there any aspect of their high school English program (the size of the school or the classes, the emphasis of the courses, etc.) which accounts for their poor writing ability?

3. Can poor writers benefit from special training?

Three procedures were used to investigate the above problems. Procedure A was to compare two groups of students: The non-remedial group was composed of one hundred college freshmen who were enrolled in the required course of communication skills and who had scored above the lowest decile on a test of English usage which was given to all students during orientation week. (*The Test of English Usage* by Benjamin B. Hickok is a fifty-item multiple-choice test covering spelling, capitalization, punctuation, grammar [but no terminology], sentence structure, and organization.) The remedial group was composed of one hundred college freshmen who were enrolled in a remedial writing course and who had scored below the lowest decile on a test of English usage. A questionnaire was used to gather data on academic background and writing training before entering college, and television, radio, movie, and letter writing habits. Derived scores on the A.C.E. Psychological Test and the Michigan

¹ This project was made possible by a grant from the faculty research committee of Michigan State College.

² Writing Improvement Service, Michigan State College.

State College Reading Test were compared.

The results of Procedure A are as follows:

Writing experiences in high school. The marked difference in the statements about the number of themes and book reports written in the final year of high school English is indicated as follows:³

| Number of Experiences | Non-Remedial Group | Remedial Group |
|-----------------------|--------------------|----------------|
| 0-3 | 6 | 28 |
| 4-6 | 12 | 26 |
| 7-10 | 25 | 23 |
| 11-19 | 28 | 20 |
| 20+ | 30 | 6 |

Median 14 Median 7

Remedial students were not satisfied with the amount of writing practice they had in high school. Approximately two out of three remedial students as compared to one out of three non-remedial students thought they did not have enough writing practice before they came to college.

Education interrupted. Approximately one out of three remedial students as compared to approximately one out of five non-remedial students waited more than a few months before coming to college.

Changed schools. Approximately two out of five remedial students as compared to one out of three non-remedial students got the early academic training in more than one institution.

Confidence in writing ability. Approximately five out of six remedial students as compared to three out of five non-remedial students felt that more pressure was put on writing ability since leaving high school.

³ See Robert C. Pooley and Robert D. Williams, *The Teaching of English in Wisconsin*, University of Wisconsin Press, Madison, Wisconsin, 1948, pp. 178-180, for a comment on the number of themes reported to have been written in high school by Wisconsin college freshmen.

Television. Remedial students watch television for about the same length of time at home and school as non-remedial students. About one out of two students in both groups says he never watches television.

Radio. Remedial students spend approximately the same number of hours per day listening to the radio as non-remedial students. One out of two students in both groups spends two or more hours a day listening to the radio.

Movies. Remedial students attend the movies a little less regularly than non-remedial students. Two out of three non-remedial students as compared to one out of two remedial students attend the movies three or more times per month.

Letter writing. Remedial students write slightly fewer letters per month than non-remedial students, although the difference does not seem to be significant.

Scores on the orientation tests. Very significant is the fact that sixty-eight percent of the remedial students as compared to twenty-eight percent of the non-remedial received scores which were below average on the linguistic part of the A.C.E. Psychological Test (verbal analogies, completion, same-opposite). In view of the findings of Edith M. Huddleston, that the most important single factor in measuring a student's writing ability is his performance on a verbal (vocabulary) test, the large number of below average scores in that area for the remedial group is certainly to be expected.⁴ On the quantitative part of the Psychological Test (arithmetic, number series, figure analogies), the mean derived score for students in the remedial group was 5.07, as compared to 5.0 for the non-remedial group. This indicates that students low in linguistic ability tend

⁴ Edith M. Huddleston, *Measurement of Writing Ability at the College Entrance Level: Objective vs. Subjective Testing Techniques*, Educational Testing Service: Princeton, New Jersey, 1952.

to offset their below-average score in this area by getting close to average scores on the quantitative part of the test.

There is not a marked difference between students in the remedial and non-remedial groups in reading ability as measured by the Michigan State College Reading Test. The mean derived score for the remedial group was 4.95 as compared to 5.0 for the non-remedial group. A detailed study by the Board of Examiners at Michigan State College indicates that "The Reading Test is the best predictor of academic success."⁶ This means that the students in the remedial group stand, in contrast to what might have been expected, only a slightly below-average chance of academic success.

Procedure B was to compare the high school English program of two groups: Group One was composed of students who had scored above the highest decile on a test of English usage; Group Two was composed of students who had scored below the lowest decile on the same test. Data for this procedure were gathered by visiting seventeen of the high schools which responded to a letter requesting material for this study. From six of the schools had come at least three students each in a three-year period who had scored below the lowest decile, from five had come at least three each who scored above the highest decile, and from six had come at least three each above the highest and below the lowest decile. A questionnaire was completed during an interview with each English department head, discussions were held with members of the English staff and students, and visits were made to some classes.

⁶ Board of Examiners, Michigan State College, *A Report on the Relationship of Orientation Test Scores and First-Term Grade Point Averages, 1953*, p. 2. The correlation between the Reading Test score and grade point average is .64.

The results of Procedure B are as follows:

The distribution by class (size) of all 469 high schools in the study, including those from which only one or two students scored above the highest or below the lowest decile, is as follows:⁶

| Highest Decile | Lowest Decile |
|----------------|---------------|
| Class A 28% | Class A 18% |
| Class B 37% | Class B 32% |
| Class C 25% | Class C 31% |
| Class D 5% | Class D 16% |

The tentative findings of this study seem to indicate that the following factors in the high school English programs do *not* seem to make a significant difference in students' ability to perform on a test of English usage, so far as the high schools and students in this study are concerned:

1. Organization into college preparatory and general English sections.
2. Presence of a core curriculum (English and social science or English and history) at some year in the English program.
3. In the twelfth year college preparatory course:
 - a) emphasis on grammar, or composition, or literature, or a long research paper.
 - b) the quality of the school library.
 - c) the use of audio-visual aids.
4. The attitude of the community toward the school.
5. The attitude of the students toward their English classes.
6. The number of pupils per day per teacher.
7. The number of classes per day per teacher.
8. The size of the classes.

In the high schools visited there seems to be no single factor or combination of

⁶ The high schools in Michigan are divided into classes according to size: Class A, 800 or more; Class B, 325-799; Class C, 150-324; Class D, under 150.

the factors listed above which will make a significant difference in the scores which students get on a test of English usage.

Procedure C was to compare the college writing marks of two groups of students. Group One was composed of one hundred and twenty-one entering freshmen who:

- a) scored below the lowest decile on a test of English usage.
- b) did not take the remedial writing course because the sections of the remedial writing course were closed before it became their alphabetical turn to register.
- c) had not received two B's on themes in their communication skills course by midterm. (Most of the students had written at least three themes in Communication Skills by midterm. Students with two B themes by midterm were excused because it was felt that regardless of test score, these students did not need a course in remedial writing.)

Group Two was composed of seventy-seven entering freshmen who:

- a) scored below the lowest decile on a test of English usage.
- b) enrolled in the remedial writing course and satisfied the requirements by the end of the first term.⁷
- c) had not received two B's on themes in communication skills by midterm.

The results of Procedure C are as follows:

| Group One (did not take remedial course) | Group Two (took remedial course) |
|--|--|
| 5 B's | 13 B's |
| 69 C's | 49 C's |
| 37 D's | 15 D's |
| 10 F's | 0 F's |

Group Two students (enrolled in the remedial writing course) received significantly higher theme grades in commun-

ication skills during their first term of college than Group One students (unable to enroll in the remedial writing course). If numerical values are assigned to letter grades (A-4, B-3, C-2, D-1, F-0), Group Two students attained a median score of 2.08 as compared to 1.65 for Group One students. It is not likely that the difference in theme grades occurred by chance. A statistical treatment of the data in the above table indicates that the difference in theme grades would occur by chance less than one time in a thousand.⁸

In summary, the characteristics of poor college writers, as evidenced by the data in this study, are as follows:

1. As a group, poor college writers complete fewer written assignments in their last year of high school, are not confident of their writing ability, were out of school longer before coming to college, changed schools more often, are much more likely to be men than women, watch television and listen to the radio an average amount of time, and see movies less often than other students. They are below average in linguistic ability, about average in quantitative ability, and just slightly below average in reading ability.

2. They come from Class A schools as frequently as they come from Class D, from Class B as frequently as Class C. The tentative findings of this study seem to indicate that there are no special characteristics of their high school Eng-

⁷ Eighty percent of the students who attended regularly satisfied the requirements of the course. Group Two students were enrolled in Communication Skills and the remedial writing course concurrently; Group One students in Communication Skills only.

⁸ When the Chi Square (χ^2) test of significance was applied, the obtained χ^2 value of the difference between the writing marks of the two groups was 17.39. This value exceeded the tabular value of $P .001$ (16.27, for three degrees of freedom). Thus the χ^2 test suggests that the difference in the theme marks would occur by chance less than one time in a thousand.

lish programs which will account for their poor writing ability.

3. They are able to make marked improvement in writing ability if subjected to special training in writing.

The generalizations listed above seem to lead to a number of implications of this study. College teachers of remedial writers need to make every possible effort to improve their students' attitude toward writing. The teachers should allow their students ample opportunity to increase their experience not only with written English, but with all matters pertaining to the use of the English language. The data on the number of written assignments in high school tends to reinforce the opinion of those who feel that good college writers are students who have had considerable experience in writing before entering college.

The data on the Reading Test indicate that college administrators should be aware of the fact that students who are weak in one area are not necessarily weak in all areas, and the study of comparative writing marks indicates that

students can improve their skills in one area if special training is provided.

The study of the high school English programs indicates that any assumption about deficiencies in the high school English curricula must be investigated much more extensively before the high schools are given as the major reason for college students who are poor in writing.⁹

Finally, the study shows that a definite program in remedial writing is a valuable aid to students deficient in this area. It indicates that many more low theme grades would be distributed if such a program were not in effect.¹⁰

⁹ See Hoyt C. Franchere, "College Freshmen Reconsider and Suggest," *College English*, XIII (March, 1952), p. 328, for another point of view.

¹⁰ Myron Miller, *The "Three R's" at Michigan State College, 1951-1952*, p. 13, reports the effect of remedial services on the rate at which students drop out of college. He concludes, "It appears that if the remedial services were in full effect (that is, if all the students who were required to enroll, did enroll), the rate of drops could be reduced to at least the level shown for new students; without a program the rate would be double that shown for new students."

Impressions of English Teaching in the U. S. A.¹

A. H. WHITE²

English is given a more prominent place in the American High School than in schools here. This is a result both of a conscious attempt to give the non-English-speaking immigrant facility in a new

language, of an educational practice that is more geared to the rates of progress of children of less ability than our good Sixth Form pupils, and in some measure of America's regard for things British.

American education is more extensive and extended than that in Britain. About 50 per cent of their adolescents complete a High School course that normally runs till the age of 18. In a population three times our own they have 3,000,000 taking full-time college education: we have about 84,000 at our universities. The power of the American woman protecting her children, the snob value of ad-

¹ EDITOR'S NOTE: Those of us—high school and college teachers—who have been either dissatisfied or satisfied with the preparation for college English of most of our high school graduates, will be interested in this account comparing secondary-school-training-in-English in the United States and in England. The article is reprinted, by permission, from *The Use of English* (London), Winter, 1953, edited by Denys Thompson.

² English Master at Stockport School, Stockport, Cheshire, England, who taught for a year as an exchange teacher at Oak Park and River Forest High School, Illinois, in 1949-1950.

vanced education, its necessity for any kind of job, and the longer period of protected growth of the young, all account for this. Throughout High School and in many colleges until the end of a four-year course English is taught.

We force our pupils in grammar schools to jump through the hoop, but in the United States work is much more attuned to the capacity of the pupils. Many of our G.C.E. candidates fail in English language. Very few American children fail to graduate from High School and attention is paid to progress during the year more than to performance in an end-of-the-course-examination. I am aware of only one external examining body—that of the Regents in New York State.

All these general factors affect English teaching. In primary schools the focus is on learning the basic skills. In High School the course for one period a day is in language and literature. The appeal of uniformity to some extent elevates grammar and analysis above expression. The study of American literature is now well established and is increasing at the expense of English literature. Preparation is often done in school under supervision. Weekly "themes" or essays, never as lengthy as those of good sixth form pupils, are undertaken, and in the final High School year a "thesis" is written. The examinations in High School are of a brief factual "slip test" form; sometimes these are even more diluted by being of the "true or false" type.

A number of activities connected with the English department, such as plays, school papers and magazines and the library enjoy far more prominence than over here. Many High Schools have a

weekly "chronicle" newspaper, with all the paraphernalia of an editorial board, reporters, etc., and also annual publications of original material. At Oak Park there were three acting clubs, besides the school society, which put on "Life with Father" and "She Stoops to Conquer" in my year. For senior boys there were two debating clubs and for senior girls three. The library had a much more liberal allocation of cash than we enjoy here. Many more journals were taken than is customary in England. In a school of 800 boys I am both Senior English Master and School Librarian. At Oak Park in a school of 2,400 there were three full-time librarians and a host of pupil helpers. Writing clubs also flourish after hours as a spare-time activity.

The idea of a certain amount of work for a given period permeates both school and college. Syllabuses are more cut-and-dried than with us, though they are achieved by staff discussion, of course. Nevertheless, college lecturing varies widely between the best and that which is merely a guide to the text book.

In the United States English is the keystone of education. There is none of the hypocritical lip-service and the nonsense we have, whereby sophisticated embryo scientists are without a course in their native language after the age of fifteen. Whilst our standards in examinations are much more exacting, the American boy will have heard something of English literature, though his cousin here knows nothing of American literature. Their courses are so much wider than ours that they are surveys, lacking the discipline demanded in our studies in set books. They scatter seed widely and thinly, we cultivate fewer fields far more intensively.

Some Can't Get A's

NORMAN NATHAN¹

No doubt many an English composition or communications class considers the problem of answering exam questions. And the imminence of examinations is in itself motivation for the student to be alert during such discussions.

But there is a way to approach the subject more dramatically. I tell my students that some of them could not get A's if they had the textbook open in front of them, their lecture notes alongside, and as much time as they needed to finish the test.

To prove the point I ask the class to select a question appropriate for a final exam. Typical choices are: What were the major causes of the American Revolution? or What were the greatest obstacles to success confronting the delegates to the Constitutional Convention?

We discuss the question in class so that there is general agreement as to important points. Each student is then expected to turn in an answer that will satisfy his classmates. To make the assignment more realistic, I assure them that for once they will be marked solely on the basis of how well they can communicate. Any kind of incorrectness will not be penalized in so far as the writing can be clearly understood.

After the papers are graded, a link remains to make the project convincing. My own marking, as my students and even I realize, may be prejudiced. I therefore select four papers varying in quality to be read in class. I caution the purists in the room not to comment on correctness, but to consider only the communicative value of the answer.

I read each paper and, before a general discussion of it, ask the students to grade the work. Since the second paper

aids the student in evaluating the relative merit of the first paper, I usually inquire if anyone wishes to change his original rating. A few accept the offer.

Student grading of all four papers has always shown that, while there is some overlapping and a few individuals disagree radically with the rest of the class, the average mark will place the papers in clearly separated categories equivalent to the B+, B, C, and D+ that teachers indulge in. Nine times out of ten, my relative judgments agree with the class decision. When this happens, I point out how appropriate it is that I should be the one to grade their papers.

At any rate, the original purpose of the assignment becomes clear. The ability to express oneself counts in every course. Some can't get A's because they don't know how to use words and ideas effectively, their own classmates, and later the world at large, being the judge.

The discussion of the individual papers brings out why this is so. "He never gets into the subject" (rambling). "I'm not sure I know what he's saying" (fragments). "The beginning's O. K." (poor organization). Most illuminating are the remarks that come from the writers of the papers. "What I meant to say is . . ." "I didn't notice a word was missing." "That's the way I took it down in my notes."

For future training, I suggest that those who are unable to express themselves well in exams should, as part of their preparation, select a likely question or two and answer it at home. By reading his own answer, analyzing it, and improving upon it, the student will gradually learn how to better his marks.

And, incidentally, probably write better themes!

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Terms In Phonemics¹

GEORGE P. FAUST²

By means of phonemic analysis, structural linguists try to discover the sound-system of a language as it is consciously or subconsciously meaningful to the speakers. A new set of terms (and symbols) is forced upon them partly because they have formed new categories and developed new techniques and partly because the familiar terms have an aura of association that would act to block understanding if they were used in new senses. The difficulty is that the new terms themselves have blocked understanding between structuralists and teachers. The problem of this article is to remove some of the barriers and show some of the uses teachers can make of the present knowledge of English structure, with no attempt to go beyond phonemics.³

But the barriers will not fall automatically with the explanation of a few technical terms. As I have tried to say earlier,⁴ we must first persuade ourselves to accept two basic tenets: (1) that speech is the primary form of language and underlies all writing, and (2) that the concern of structuralists is with the mechanisms of language as a medium, not with the "message" (meaning) carried by the medium.

¹ The second of a series of three articles dealing with Structural Linguistics. The first of the series appeared in *College Composition and Communication* for December, 1953; the third will appear in the May, 1954, issue.

² University of Kentucky

³ In general, this article will follow the analysis in George L. Trager and Henry Lee Smith, Jr., *An Outline of English Structure (Studies in Linguistics: Occasional Papers No. 3)*, 1951. This is a thoroughly technical piece of work not recommended for beginners. The best available starting point is Robert A. Hall's *Leave Your Language Alone!* (Linguistica: Ithaca, N. Y.), 1950. If you don't like the social attitudes expressed, ignore them and concentrate on the very able exposition of linguistics.

⁴ "Basic Tenets of Structural Linguistics," CCC, December, 1953, pages 122-126.

These two tenets accepted, let us start by fastening attention on the *p*-sounds in the possible expression 'rapid pup.' We will follow the general practice of putting phonetic symbols in brackets, e.g., [p], and phonemic symbols between slashes, e.g., /p/. In a phonemic transcription of my speech without stress and intonation marked, we can set our expression down as /raepid pəp/. This is not phonetic, for among other things any competent phonetician could hear differences among the *p*-sounds as he listened to me. If he took the first as a phonetic norm, he might transcribe them in order as [p], [p'], and [p"], with ['] standing for aspiration (a puff of air that can be felt on the back of the hand held close to the mouth) and ["] indicating no release by reopening the lips. All three varieties are called allophones.

To put it as untechnically as I can, ALLOPHONES are phonetically similar sounds that never get in each other's way. As native speakers of English, we have learned to use the proper allophones automatically and to ignore them completely in our own speech and in the speech of others. This means that if you know that a word has two pronunciations, they differ phonemically, not allophonically. It is only when a foreigner fails to use the right allophones that we become vaguely conscious that something is wrong: The foreigner, we say, speaks English with an accent. In all this we are reacting quite normally, and no phonetically untrained reader should be disturbed if he fails to hear allophonic differences.

Allophones have COMPLEMENTARY DISTRIBUTION, the technical term that corresponds to "never get in each other's way." This is a tricky term to handle.

Allophones tend to be restricted. That is, [p'] simply cannot appear at the beginning of a word because we have to reopen our lips to get on with the word. On the other hand, [p'] does on occasion replace [p] at the end of a word. But we speakers react to /pəp/ as the "same" word, no matter which allophone is used, and any sense of difference here is likely to be referred to the speaker's attitude, not his dialect. Therefore, the allophones never collide, even when they alternate with one another, and they complement one another in such a way that in sum they take care of all the situations in which their phoneme occurs.

Complementary distribution is one side of the coin, CONTRASTIVE DISTRIBUTION the other. Sounds contrast most obviously when the difference produces different words. Thus /p/ and /f/ contrast because 'pup' is not 'puff' (/pəf/). And one contrast anywhere in the language is enough to establish separate phonemes everywhere in the language. It is known quite definitely that [p] between vowels is voiced in normal American speech and is thus very close to [b] in the same situation—at least as close to [b] phonetically as to initial [p']. But since [p] and [b] are assigned by speakers to different phonemes (cf. the contrast between /pet/ and /bet/), the phonetic similarity is inconsequential. You can test this for yourself. Just invite a friend to pat your 'rabid pup' and see whether his reactions are like those of the friends you have invited to pat your 'rapid pup.'

Here it is necessary to insist that the difference in meaning is the *result* of the difference in sound. Strangers who hear my weakly aspirated initial /p/ (an individual peculiarity) quite easily "misunderstand" me and think, for instance, that my middle initial is B instead of P. The sense of "misunderstand" here is that they have misclassified a sound, with re-

sultant change of meaning.

An error of this sort points up one extremely important difference between phonetics and phonemics. In phonetics a sound can be between a /p/ and a /b/ in the sense that it can have certain characteristics of each, such as the voicelessness of an initial /p/ and the relatively weak aspiration of an initial /b/. The phonetician tries to describe the sound actually produced. But in phonemics there are no gradations. A sound is assigned to one phoneme or another, and there is no in-between stage. The linguistic evidence goes to show that we hear in terms of phonemes and listen to only as much of a sound as we need to in order to assign it to an established phoneme. This is a fundamental reason why phonemic transcriptions don't need to distinguish among allophones.

We should now be ready for some definitions. A sound produced is a PHONE. It is a unique historical event, in theory as individual as a fingerprint. Obviously, only a microscopic sample of the phones produced ever get recorded, and yet the patterning of language is such that linguists can classify as confidently as though they had a statistically large sample. In great measure, this is because they have occasion to concentrate on only a few variations. The subclasses into which phones are fitted are ALLOPHONES, each of which, though in complementary distribution, is distinct from all others by at least one phonetic feature. At this level we are still in a region where sounds may be symbolized in phonetic transcription. Next, the allophones are gathered into one class, a PHONEME, which is distinguished by the phonetic similarity of its members and by its contrastive distribution with other phonemes.

To tie all three together, any phone may be called a phone (i.e., an individual sound) or an allophone (i.e., a member of an allophone) or a phoneme (i.e.,

a member of a phoneme). Imagine that I now hear you say 'pup.' The first sound was a phone, already past history. As long as it remains unclassified, I can call it nothing but a phone. Probably I will next classify it as a member of the phoneme /p/, and now I can call it either a phone or a phoneme. When finally I group it with other members of /p/ that have aspiration, I can also call it an allophone of /p/, and I can describe that allophone phonetically as [p']. In the same kind of way, all other vowel-like or consonant-like phones can be identified as belonging to one or another of the thirty-three phonemes that make up this part of the English sound-system.

For teachers, the usefulness of having a working acquaintance with these phonemes is that it sheds valuable light on many spelling problems. All of us already know, in a relatively unsystematic way, that our students tend to reflect their pronunciations in their writing, but the remedies we have offered have sometimes been unrealistic, to a considerable extent because we have confused letters and sounds. One pronunciation of *often*, now well established, is supposed to be due to the letter *t* in the spelling—some people, apparently, never thought of *soften*. Once we realize that *used to* is regularly pronounced /yuwstuw/, not /yuwzd tuw/, we may be more sympathetic to the spelling *use to*, which is really very sensible, if not orthodox. Of course we should try to impress the conventional spelling but not, I suggest, at the cost of a pronunciation which may be unforced for some speakers but which I never happen to have heard attempted except by teachers. Again, probably many of us tear our hair over students who seem unable to pluralize words like *scientist*. But a great many standard speakers have /-s/ at the end of such words instead of /-st/, and to them the plural presumably sounds just like the

singular.⁵ It would strike an informed teacher as unreasonable to attempt to modify a standard pronunciation; it would be better to show the students that for spelling such words they cannot trust their ears. This is the type of situation which a knowledge of phonemics enables a teacher to handle sensibly.

To return to the sound-system, the set of phonemes referred to so far are called SEGMENTAL PHONEMES to distinguish them from another more recently discovered set, the SUPRASEGMENTAL PHONEMES. These consist of stresses, pitches, and junctures—the last being modes of transition from one speech-segment to another. Of course the fact of their existence is not news; the recent knowledge is of their contrastive distribution into phonemes, which has been worked out in considerable detail during the last ten years by Kenneth Pike and others.

STRESS is familiar as what we call accent in dictionaries, where only three relative degrees are necessary, counting the unmarked as weak. (However, you should not expect dictionaries to be accurate on stress. For example, they leave the second syllable of *cargo* unmarked, though it definitely has more stress than the second syllable of *sofa*—as much, in my speech, as the marked second syllable of *blackbird*.) Connected speech has a fourth degree of stress which overrides the others and which we use to establish word-groups. Customary symbols of stress are

/~, `~, ^~, '~, /,

called primary, secondary, tertiary, and weak.

Where's the *cárgó* illustrates the four phonemic stresses.

The very idea that relative levels of PITCH are contrastive is a novelty. Here

⁵ A structurally more accurate way of putting this is that the final consonant cluster /-sts/ is non-existent in the speech of many Americans.

there is nothing like a familiar dictionary to fall back on, and since the proof is somewhat complicated, about all that can be done here is to make the flat assertion that English has four phonemic pitches. The joke 'What are we having for dinner? Mother?' depends on the misuse of pitch levels. In the commonplace 'What are we having for dinner, Mother?' the vocative can be either at the lowest pitch or the next above, but it can never be at either of the two highest pitches. With next-to-top pitch, as in the joke, 'mother' becomes a separate question.⁶

Pitches are usually symbolized by numbers: /^{1, 2, 3, 4}/ . Unfortunately, there are two systems in use, one that numbers from the top and one that begins at the bottom. Other devices, like dotted lines above and below the text, are also in use.

The phonemes of JUNCTURE, or TRANSITION, are classes of the ways we use to pass from one bit or stretch of linguistic material to the next. If this merely seems a clumsy way of saying something like "get from one phrase or sentence to the next," the reason is that the use of juncture helps to define terms like *phrase* and *sentence*. Therefore we cannot, without circular reasoning, use the terms in describing juncture. As a minor digression, let me point out that our standard practice has been to use circularity, though often at one or two removes. We may use *sentence* to help define *verb*, and then turn around and use *verb* to help define *sentence*. The structuralists try very hard not to fall into this sort of trap.

The four phonemes of juncture are symbolized by /+, |, ||, #/, called plus juncture, single bar juncture, double bar juncture, and double cross juncture respectively. PLUS JUNCTURE, which classi-

cally distinguishes 'night rate' from 'nitrate,' can be left behind with the observation that it always occurs at least between secondary stresses, and between a secondary and primary, unless one of the other three junctures is there. (This, of course, like all that follows, is a rule of the language, not of the structuralists; it is a phenomenon observed, not created.) The remaining junctures can be thought of as major, for they serve to establish what is probably the basic rule of English grammar: There is always one, and only one, primary stress between any pair of /|, ||, #/. This rule is completely accurate if the silence before speech is counted as a major juncture and if the speaker is not interrupted. For example, both these versions are accepted by listeners as normal English:

My ólder bróther is a plúmber.
My ólder bróther | is a plúmber.

SINGLE BAR JUNCTURE can be read as transition across a fairly minor break with pitch sustained to the point of juncture. It is never an uninterrupted speaker's final juncture. DOUBLE BAR JUNCTURE is familiar to us as the rising "question intonation," a thoroughly misleading term. The questions that end in double bar are those without question words, like 'Are you going?' and 'He's here?' In all but perhaps a very few dialects, questions like 'Where are you going?' do not end in double bar. Polite vocatives always end with double bar: 'I'm going, Mother.' Especially in rather slow speech, the rise of double bar is common within the conventional sentence:

The sóldiers in Koréa || wànted to
gét hóme.

DOUBLE CROSS JUNCTURE is marked by voice fade-out, and usually a lowering of pitch. It appears where periods have been used in the examples, and at the end of 'Where are you going?' It also appears, at least in some reading styles, before what we have been trained to call

⁶ I am indebted to H. L. Smith, Jr., for this passage, joke included.

a non-restrictive subordinate clause at the end of a sentence.

The implications of the suprasegmental phonemes for teachers are important. Almost all marks of punctuation are juncture signals, as we demonstrate again and again by reading aloud mis-punctuated student sentences to show that they sound queer. Some of us, perhaps, sometimes even deliberately mis-read the student's punctuation because it violates an editorial rule, not a linguistic principle. But almost nobody, within my knowledge, is equipped to give students a sensible explanation of punctuation in terms of major junctures and the arbitrary rules of editors.⁷

Reading styles differ within rather narrow limits, but for the sake of illustration we can arbitrarily pick one in which /#/ is symbolized by a period and /||/ by a comma. No other junctures are marked by punctuation. If the student gives the reading 'He wasn't there /||/ therefore I didn't see him,' the comma before *therefore* is right linguistically, however wrong it may be editorially. If he reads 'I didn't go to the dance /#/ because I was too tired,' the proper punctuation linguistically is into two sentences. In the past year and a half, I have marked comma faults and fragments RA for "Read aloud." When the student's reading has been right linguistically, I have been able to show him how to identify the situations in which he cannot trust to his ear for punctuation. Without claiming perfect results, I can say that I have been astonished at how readily students of all levels have taken to my explanations and how often they have asked me why punctuation was never explained to them that way in high school.

Over and above such editorial errors

⁷ By far the best available explanation is that by A. H. Marckwardt in the Thorndike-Barnhart *Comprehensive Desk Dictionary* (Doubleday), 1951, pp. 21-24.

in punctuation, the suprasegmental phonemes are important in helping students understand why we group words as we do and how it happens that writing produced by the unwary is often ambiguous. Students can see (and hear) that junctures enclose word groups, and when they understand that the number of junctures increases as the pace of reading slows, they can more and more guard their readers against misunderstanding. 'After eating the baby fell asleep' (which I owe to a former colleague) tends to disappear. This is not simply a matter of punctuation, for often the student either alters the word order ('The baby fell asleep after eating') or makes a substitution ('After its meal the baby fell asleep'). The reason it disappears is that the student has discovered that

After éating the báby . . .
is a possible alternative to

After éating . . .

The sound system of English, then, has a rather direct bearing on what teachers do in the classroom. In particular, familiarity with the segmental phonemes should make for an understanding of spelling difficulties due to dialect and should kill once and for all the notion that unconventional phonemic spelling is a sign that the speller "doesn't speak good English" or "doesn't enunciate his words clearly": When the snow is deep, many of the best people wear

/ártiks/, not /árktiks/.

And second, acquaintance with the suprasegmental phonemes can help us realize why naive students punctuate as they do and manage to produce some of their howlers. It is not a question of studying speech for its own sake; it is a question of being able to put our fingers quite precisely on what is amiss and of being in a position to help each student accommodate himself to our traditional writing system and its editorial expectations.

The Graduate Assistant and the Freshman English Student - A Panel Discussion¹

T. J. KALLSEN,² RECORDER

Charles W. Roberts, "The Problem":
At the University of Illinois, the graduate assistant as a teacher of Freshman English is important: 99% of a staff of 75 are graduate assistants; each period of five or six years sees an almost complete turnover; 20-30% of the staff are new each year. Although Illinois may not be typical, its situation suggests problems that other universities undoubtedly have.³

Jack O. Garlington, "Advantages and Disadvantages of the System":

To the graduate student, the chief advantage of the teaching-assistant system is that it allows him to work toward the Ph.D. directly: he does not have to skip from scholarship to scholarship (a precarious living), and he is spared the system of teaching several years, saving his pay, and taking sabbaticals or summer-school leaves to continue with his work. Another advantage is that he is acquiring experience.

The chief disadvantage charged to him is that he must split his time between teaching and studying. But such a division is common to the profession: it does not stop with the Ph.D.—many would argue that a teacher who stops studying has also stopped teaching.

At Wisconsin, all the teaching assistants possess the M.A. degree; in the course of study toward that degree they have acquired an adequate sense of style, and while studies beyond that point will sharpen that sense, and make it more subtle, the demands of the course are more for clarity of statement and thought than for the high stylistic polish the post-M.A. study will bring. At our university, where the top and the bottom layers of the freshmen—those who are exceptionally well prepared and those who are poorly prepared—are skimmed off, most graduate students feel they are quite capable of teaching freshman composition.

Ednah S. Thomas, "Devices for Training Graduate Assistants":

Disclaiming any pretension to novelty or infallibility, we shall discuss the devices used for training graduate assistants at the University of Wisconsin from the point of view of timing and tone. Our first device is the commonly used staff meeting. With us the new teacher has four staff meetings before his first class. Here the basic nature of the course is established—a service course, designed to supply students in humanities, agriculture and engineering alike with the command of clear straightforward written English. Here also the new teacher is given concrete illustrations of the handling of our three types of class hours: composition discussion, based on student themes; analysis of an essay for writing techniques; content (for example, sentence structure), based on an assignment in the rhetoric text. After classes begin,

¹ At the Spring Meeting of the Conference on College Composition and Communication, Chicago, Illinois, March 14, 1953. Participating, in addition to the Recorder: Edgar Lacy, Participating Chairman, Ednah S. Thomas and Jack Garlington, all of the University of Wisconsin; Charles W. Roberts and J. Dudley Bailey, both of the University of Illinois.

² West Virginia University

³ These problems are listed in the introduction to Mr. Bailey's paper, which is given in full, on pages 37-40.

staff meetings are held regularly, so timed as to anticipate units of work and student questions on those units. Not only staff meetings but also individual conferences are used in the discussion of grading; since freshmen receive comments on their themes but no grade until the six weeks report, there is time for this. Conferences, our second device, are scheduled in connection with grading and with visiting of classes, our third device; unscheduled additional conferences are held as the new teacher wishes. Class visiting is done first semester by the directors of the training program, and second semester by members of the senior staff not connected with the Freshman English office. These visits also are accompanied by conferences. Our fourth device is committee work, assigned sparingly to teachers who have had at least a full year of experience.

The ideal tone of a classroom is difficult to determine. Like sentence structure, it should vary; and at least sometimes it may be light. Basically, however, it should be one of serious respect for the student, with the determination not to allow him to do less than his best; and the student should respond with respect for the teacher. The two are further united in their respect for the work they are doing together. Under these conditions, we hope that the undergraduate and the graduate may both profit by their association in the classroom.

Edgar W. Lacy, "Safeguards for Satisfactory Functioning of the System":

The system of using graduate students to teach freshmen can be regarded as functioning satisfactorily in a particular university (1) if the student in the Freshman English course is properly taught and (2) if the graduate assistant is able to pay proper attention both to his teaching and to his graduate work.

Faced with its own peculiar problems, the Department of English at the University of Wisconsin has set up three safeguards found necessary to make the system work both for the freshman student and for the graduate assistant: (1) the right person must be selected to be a graduate assistant; (2) the graduate assistant must not be asked to do more than he can humanly be expected to do as a teacher and as a graduate student; (3) the graduate assistant must not be asked to do more than he has experience to do. (1) To be eligible for an assistantship at Wisconsin the applicant must have completed the Master's degree in English and be working toward the Ph.D. degree in English. At the time of initial appointment an applicant must submit at least one letter evaluating his known or potential teaching ability; the applicant is told explicitly that equal emphasis will be placed on satisfactory teaching and graduate work. Renewal of an appointment is based on reports of teaching (filed by senior staff members after visiting classes) and on graduate-course records. (2) By keeping a balance between the teaching load and the graduate-course load, a department can feel fairly confident that the graduate assistant is not being asked to do more than he can be expected to do: at Wisconsin the maximum teaching load is two sections of composition; with this teaching assignment the maximum graduate-course load is one half of a full load. (3) At Wisconsin the top group of entering freshmen (placed in a special one-semester course) and the lowest group (placed in a non-credit course) are taught by full-time staff members having experience in handling problems peculiar to these two groups. In the middle group, all new staff members have an opportunity to work economically and effectively within a framework set up by more experienced staff members.

The Graduate Assistant and the Freshman English Student

DUDLEY BAILEY¹

[This paper is a revision of remarks prepared for the fifth panel discussion of the Spring 1953 meeting of the CCCC in Chicago, a panel discussion of the general topic which forms the title of this article. I was asked to participate in the discussion; I hope I was expected to give some candid observations from the graduate student's point of view. Since I gathered that such observations are ignored or discouraged usually in the national organization and often in local freshman programs, I welcomed my invitation with enthusiasm. And my enthusiasm, perhaps, accounts for my ranging beyond these five specific questions, towards which we had agreed to direct our remarks:

- (1) What are the advantages and disadvantages of having graduate students teach undergraduates?
- (2) If such a system is to be successful, what safeguards are necessary for the graduate and for the undergraduate?
- (3) What are some effective devices used in training the graduate student for teaching freshman English?
- (4) What is the ideal proportion of graduate students to permanent staff members on the teaching staff of freshman English?
- (5) Should the graduate student teach literature as well as composition?]

Before considering these specific questions, I feel I should bring up two matters that curiously seem to escape direct consideration in the plethora of panels

and workshops set up by the CCCC. The first is, to my mind, of greatest importance, and its omission of greatest concern, because it strikes me as the keystone problem facing freshman programs and one the solution of which will bring automatically the solutions of many, if not all, lesser difficulties. That is the problem of good men. How can good men be attracted to and kept in freshman programs? That is the problem which everyone faces most directly, and the problem which, until it is faced squarely and answered boldly, will continue to render nugatory the discussions of most others.

Now, this problem can be dodged, as we all know, in many fashions. It can be dodged, for instance, with the old epistemological frustration: how do you tell a good man? But unless that question really means, how can you be sure of never making a mistake? it strikes me as a question that no man ever really asks himself seriously. No one thinks he is incapable of separating bright men from numbskulls, good men from evil ones, able men from incompetents. And the obscuring of the responsibility for that separation — in questionnaires about scholarly and pedagogical activities, in advisory letters and conferences, in appraisals by students and colleagues—does not obscure the administrator's real problem. Others may mistake his judgmental paralysis for a commendable attempt to "objectify" his deliberations. But he should realize that the mistakings of others may not eliminate—may, rather, aggravate—his real difficulties.

Indeed—and this leads to my second general remark—an administrator's willingness to assume the responsibility of

¹ University of Illinois

his administrative position (the implicit decisions, the necessary faith in and support of his subordinates, the courage to hold to his clear concept of his and his staff's functions and ends)—the willingness to assume such responsibilities constitutes, to my mind, the only legitimate demands of a graduate assistant—or any other subordinate for that matter—upon his administrative superior. On the other hand, no one expects his administrator to make him intelligent, or learned, or wise, or for that matter, even good. The presumption to make him intelligent he takes as blasphemy; the presumption to make him learned he takes as arrogance; the presumption to make him wise he takes as pride; and the presumption to make him good he takes as indecency.

Now, I am not at all privately splenetic about my calling or about my present position. Rather, I am reporting for a comparatively large number of comparatively unrepresented people who are very much involved and interested in the business of freshman English. A great deal of freshman English is being taught these days by graduate students. They daily have their noses rubbed in undergraduate illiteracy. And any one who suspects for a moment that they find balm in their administrator's preoccupation with normalizing their grading curves, or with checking their deviations from a syllabus, or with articulating their work with a high school course of study that may or may not make any sense, or with protecting their students from their impatience with laziness and stupidity, or with protecting a board of trustees from the conceivable embarrassment or a gratuitous or irregular comment, or with the jealous guarding of the sacro-sanctity of a none-too-clearly-conceived "in-service training program"—anyone who suspects anything of the sort is very seriously disoriented.

Graduate assistants are young perhaps; they make many mistakes. But on the

whole they are of the same stuff as is the rest of the academic community, and they are neither vicious, nor lazy, nor cowardly. And, as I hope my remarks hitherto suggest, they do not feel that they have any monopoly on error.

The graduate student's reaction to some of the questions posed above, quite properly I think, is one of intense resentment. Implicit in some of them is the idea of the "superimposed program" which will breed success with even completely sterile staff members. And implicit furthermore is the notion that the function of an administrative director is to concoct a program and superimpose it upon whatever collection of humanity falls, by the vagaries of institutional operation, to his direction. Such a notion is not one of the myriad jokes in twentieth-century pedagogy, perhaps, only because it is so widely and tenaciously held.

In a sense, the immediate answer to all the questions above and all such questions is "Hire good men. Treat them as men, and assume their competency until you cannot but do otherwise." But brief answers to the specific questions with which I began this paper may both elucidate my general remarks and bring out other pertinent observations.

Graduate students have qualities which contribute a great deal to the instruction in such programs as I've known. As yet unsophisticated to the point that they know the general professional contempt for freshman English, as yet believing that all knowledge is worthy of their attention, as yet unpersuaded of the division of form and content which often drains the vitality from the instruction of their older colleagues—they come to their task with enthusiasm and faith; and they often see and readily admit as pertinent to their instruction something of the proper vastness and excitement of student life and student thinking.

On the other hand, the disadvantages

of graduate students are pretty much the disadvantages of any other sort of teachers. The graduate group is not homogenized: some is cream, some pretty blue. But who finds otherwise of full professors, or directors, or deans as groups? Again, graduate students have divided loyalties: they work toward a degree as well as teach; indeed, they may also have interest in their wives and children, their gardens, their lodges, their political parties, their churches. But division of attention is true on all academic levels. The siren songs of publishable research are quite as sweet and ineluctable to senior staff members as are those of the Ph.D. degree to the graduate student. Directors and deans must serve at least two masters, usually rather more.

Since mankind generally finds its energies and attention divided, to make too much of any single division strikes me as unwise. For men, in the face of such divisions, are pretty much of a piece. I have yet to meet an example of the too-much-insisted-upon "good research man but poor teacher." My experience persuades me that the best teachers are the best students; men with poor academic records seem almost without exception to be bad teachers; and bad teachers seem almost invariably to be bad scholars, in any defensibly qualitative sense.

In keeping with these remarks, I can find no answer at all to the fourth question listed above. A Ph.D. does not metamorphose a man; neither does academic rank. Full professorships do not carry with them infallibility. The only sensible ideal proportion of any staff is "all good." Whether they enjoy any particular academic rank is beside the ideal point.

The safeguards necessary for a graduate-assistant system are the safeguards requisite for any other system. Just as any other teacher, the graduate assistant needs protection from extraneous demands and pressures—of disgruntled stu-

dents, of fraternities and sororities, of alumni, of athletic associations, and of his institution's administration. His academic freedom is as consequential to the institution as that of any full professor. At the same time, refuge from his instructional duties in his graduate studies should be no more tolerated than refuge in "research" should be tolerated in his higher-ranking colleagues.

On the other side, the undergraduate should be protected, as always, against incompetency, indifference, and mediocrity. And the only practicable insurance against these is to be found in the careful selection of a staff. The energies directed toward "training devices" are largely misdirected; and most of them derive from a mistaken supposition of comparative incompetency.

The first and most universally felt shortcoming among graduate assistants is one of subject-matter—and in my experience, specifically an ignorance of systematic grammar. Having sat in classes and had their work marked and graded for years, they feel capable of conducting classes and evaluating student work; and if they are reasonably able, by any fair comparison with other staff members, they are. But most of them spend their first term learning grammar a day or so ahead of their students; and they live in terror for a term or so lest a student ask an embarrassing subject-matter question.

But in this respect, how greatly do they differ from their colleagues in literature? The suspiciously popular notion in freshman English circles that young Ph.D.'s are "trained" in literature avoids the fact that most of them prepare for their first teaching assignments in literature quite as feverishly, quite as inefficiently, and quite as apprehensively as do the teachers of composition. And those who, especially fond of that notion, busy themselves with concocting in-service

and out-service nostrums and tampering with graduate school curricula, might better employ themselves looking on the other side of the fence in their own departments—or, indeed, if they have preserved that sort of respect for their own earlier years which Coleridge reminds us is the mark of a full man, they might recall their own experience.

As for the final question I listed above—teaching literature is often held out as a reward for good teaching in freshman programs. Implicit in that reward system is an acquiescence in the general feeling among English instructors that anything is better than Freshman English. So long as good performance in the freshman program is rewarded by an escape from it, I can see no likelihood of dispelling the jinx freshman programs operate under. And they display no very enviable sanity, perhaps, in persisting in feeding the dog that's biting them.

Yet a separation of the freshman program from the department of English would be, I think, a serious mistake. The most likely source of good graduate

teachers is to be found there, and I feel, and not completely out of sentiment, that the place of the program is in the English department. The overwillingness of English departments to assume the responsibility for college-level literacy has, to my mind, reflected impulsive and foolish policy. And the detachment of the freshman program might serve to restrict further a responsibility that is, both theoretically and practically, university-wide. Besides, detachment may only be a dodge of the thorny problem of achievement of respectability within the department or the institution. But I cannot believe that that achievement, in the long run, is contingent upon anything but the respectability of the men doing the job.

As I began, so I end: the primary problem is one of men. And the sooner we turn our energies to ways and means of getting and holding good men in our programs, the sooner we may hope to end our morbid self-examinations and to resume a position of some importance in the academic community.

Secretary's Report No. 9

BEVERLY E. FISHER¹

Minutes, Annual Business Meeting, Conference on College Composition and Communication, Friday, November 27, 1953 (luncheon meeting), Sierra Room, Hotel Statler, Los Angeles, California, Associate Chairman T. A. Barnhart presiding. Number present: 161.

1. Secretary Beverly E. Fisher announced the results of the mail ballot: The three Amendments to the Constitution and the one Amendment to the By-Laws (see *College Composition and Communication*, May, 1953, pp. 54-56) were passed. The following officers were elected: T. A. Barnhart, St. Cloud, Chair-

man; Jerome Archer, Marquette, Associate Chairman; Irwin Griggs, Temple, Assistant Chairman. The following were elected to the Executive Committee: Universities, Philip Wiklund, Indiana, Robert Gorrell, Nevada; Liberal Arts Colleges, Albert Upton, Whittier, Mrs. W. R. Van Gelder, Howard; Teachers Colleges, Rachel Salisbury, Milwaukee, Wright Thomas, Cortland; Technical Schools, Fred Lorch, Iowa State; Junior Colleges, Inez Frost, Hutchinson.

2. Treasurer W. Wilbur Hatfield reported a balance on hand as of February 28, 1953, \$1216.82; expenses, \$984.90; income, \$1779.84; balance on hand as of

¹ Santa Monica City College

November 18, 1953, \$2011.76. At that date there were 339 individual members, 37 institutional members, and 17 library subscriptions.

3. Assistant Chairman Jerome Archer detailed plans for the Annual Spring Meeting of the CCCC at the Jefferson Hotel, St. Louis, March 4, 5, and 6, 1954. Four sessions for the workshops, three groups of panel discussions, two general sessions, a social hour, and the annual luncheon are scheduled. Members of the CCCC are asked to send their recommendations and suggestions to Mr. Archer.

4. Associate Chairman T. A. Barnhart, reporting for Chairman Karl Dykema, announced that the 1955 Spring Meeting will be held in Chicago and that the 1956 Spring Meeting will be held in either Boston or Philadelphia.

5. The Associate Chairman read the report of Donald E. Bird, liaison representative of the CCCC to work with the NSSC (see Minutes, Meeting of Executive Committee, March 12, 1953, Item 8). The following projects have been undertaken: members of each group's executive committee have received copies of the other group's publication; several articles in the *NSSC Journal* have been

reviewed in *College Composition and Communication*; the former publication will include a page entitled "CCCC News" in each issue; the chairman of the NSSC Committee on College Courses in Communication has been asked to offer his services to Irwin Griggs, Chairman of the Committee for the Study of the Professional Status of the Teacher of Composition and Communication.

6. The Associate Chairman briefly summarized the successful 1953 Spring Meeting at Chicago last March.

7. The Secretary read the report of Editor George S. Wykoff, who thanked workshop chairmen and secretaries of the 1952 and 1953 Spring Meetings for their 100% report-submittal. Mr. Wykoff listed new features in *CCC*—the CCCC Bulletin Board, "Some of the Year's Work in Composition and Communication" (suggested by the Chairman, Karl Dykema), and the summary page of NSSC news, prepared by Donald Bird. In conclusion the Editor gratefully acknowledged the editorial services of Porter Perrin and Louis Forsdale during 1953. During the present Editor's term, *College Composition and Communication* has grown to a minimum of thirty-two pages each issue.

Secretary's Report No. 10

BEVERLY E. FISHER¹

Minutes, Meeting of Executive Committee, Conference on College Composition and Communication, Mezzanine Lobby, Hotel Statler, Los Angeles, California, Friday, November 27, 1953, 2:30 P.M. Associate Chairman T. A. Barnhart presiding. Members present: Allen, Archer, Barnhart, Brown, Fisher, Leggett, Mason, Shoemaker, and Young.

1. William A. Sutton of the Committee for the Study of the Professional Sta-

tus of the Teacher of Composition and Communication introduced a proposal to study, during a sabbatical leave, the professional status of composition/communication teachers in the state of Indiana by interviews and other suitable means. It was moved by Harold B. Allen that the Executive Committee accept the conditional offer of William A. Sutton to make a pilot study as proposed, subject to the consent and direction of Irwin Griggs, Chairman of the Committee con-

¹ Santa Monica City College

cerned. The proposal was seconded and passed. It was further suggested that a question check list such as was used by Mr. Allen in his study be employed to facilitate obtaining information.

2. The matter of revision of the Constitution was discussed. Major subjects taken up were the questions of when a person is elected when a mail ballot is used and of when incoming officers assume their positions. It was suggested that the newly elected officers take office on January 1 following the Annual Business Meeting at which they are elected. It was further suggested that the Secretary prepare a statement of inconsistencies now existent in the Constitution, the report to be made at the Spring

Meeting of the Executive Committee.

3. The matter of renewal of CCCC membership was introduced. Since the National Council of Teachers of English will now renew memberships on November 1 of each year, it was the consensus of opinion that this date would be best for renewal of CCCC memberships.

4. The next matter of business was that of memberships in the CCCC of members of the Speech Association of America. Since Article II, Section 2, of the Constitution (see Item 1, Minutes, Annual Business Meeting, November 27, 1953) now grants such memberships, the incoming Chairman was directed to inform the Executive Secretary of the SAA of the action taken.

NSSC News

DONALD E. BIRD¹

Study and Research committees of the National Society for the Study of Communication sponsored or assisted in the sponsorship of nine sectional meetings on problems of communication at the national convention of the Speech Association of America in New York on December 27-30, 1953.

Subjects discussed at the meetings included: "The Preparation of Teachers of Communication," "What is Communication?", "Toward a Theory of Communication," "Communication: What Management Wants to Say and What Labor and the Public Want to Know," "Communication in Intercultural Relations," "Graphics in Communication," and "Mass Media in Communication." Among the panel speakers were: Paul Bagwell, Michigan State College; Orville Pence, University of Washington; J. L. Moreno, Sociometric Institute; David N. Tyre, Esso Standard Oil Company; Mrs. Jeanne Singer, Public Affairs Officer, U. S. Mis-

sion to the U. N.; William Lowe, Executive Editor, *Look*; and Garnett Garrison, University of Michigan.

Reports on the meetings will appear in the NSSC News Letter and in *The Journal of Communication*.

At the business meeting of NSSC in New York the committees reported on work done during the past year. Among activities and projects reported were the following:

1. *Committee on Communication Centers*—Earl Wynn, University of North Carolina, Chairman. The committee conducted a questionnaire study of communication activity in 277 colleges and universities. They discovered that 134 of the institutions have no such activity; 128 offer instruction in some phase of communication; 66 are involved in production; 16 carry on research; and 2 have "Communication Centers."

2. *Committee on Business and Industry*—Don Farr, Methods Engineering Council, Chairman. The committee

¹ Stephens College

agreed on a tentative definition of communication: "Communication is a mutual exchange of facts, thoughts, opinions, or emotions. This requires presentation and reception, resulting in common and better understanding among all parties."

3. *Committee on Communication in the Military Service*—Colonel Eugene Myers, Hq, USAF, Chairman. The committee collected information concerning communication courses at 17 military schools. They found considerable variety in nature of courses, objectives, emphases, time spent, and materials used. Twelve of the schools offered instruction in speech, ten in writing, eight in reading, and three in listening.

4. *Committee on College Programs*—Burton Byers, Provost Marshal General's School, Camp Gordon, Georgia, Chairman. A sub-committee on bibliography reviewed 200 articles on communication appearing in the *Journal of Educational Psychology* between 1920 and 1950.

5. *Committee on Communication in the Secondary Schools*—Joe W. Fitts, Jr., El Rancho High School, Rivera, California, Chairman. Committee members agreed (1) that communication is not the adding of a speech course to the curriculum; and (2) that instilling in students a greater understanding of self and personality does not of itself necessarily justify the adding of the label "communication."

6. *Committee on Reading Comprehension*—James I. Brown, University of Minnesota, Chairman. The committee reported on a comparative study of the teachability of reading and listening. Brown concluded, "It would appear that reading and listening are both about

equally amendable to improvement."

The reports of these committees and the other nine Study and Research committees will be summarized in *The Journal of Communication*.

The following officers were elected at the business meeting:

President—Major Kenneth Clark, AR-OTC, University of Washington

1st Vice-President—Burton Byers, Provost Marshal General's School

2nd Vice-President—Joseph Baccus, University of Redlands

Executive Secretary—Donald E. Bird, Stephens College.

National Council members-at-large: John Q. Jennings, Consultant on Industrial Relations, Singer Manufacturing Company, and Roy McCall, University of Oregon.

At the NSSC luncheon President Clark reviewed the accomplishments of NSSC during 1953:

1. Local chapters were organized at Portland, Seattle, Denver, East Lansing, and Honolulu, and chapters were planned at Los Angeles, New York City, and Durham, North Carolina.

2. The first Summer Conference of NSSC was conducted at Estes Park on August 31, September 1, 2, 1953, for the consideration of problems of communication.

3. NSSC became an affiliate of the Speech Association of America, with Elwood Murray, immediate past president, representing NSSC on the National Council of SAA.

4. Working relationships were established with CCCC, through the activity of Donald E. Bird, official liaison representative.

CCCC Bulletin Board

College Composition and Communication takes pleasure in announcing as new members of our Editorial Board for three-year terms James B. McMillan of the University of Alabama and Jane Dale of the Oregon College of Education. Although areas are not rigid, Mr. McMillan will in general represent the universities, the South, and language and linguistics; Miss Dale will represent the West and the teachers' colleges. Deep appreciation is hereby expressed to Louis Forsdale, Teachers College, Columbia, and Porter G. Perrin, University of Washington, for their services during the past year.

Memorandum to authors of handbooks: More frequently than expected, a writer—or editor—is faced with the problem of punctuation when he is listing an a, b, and c, series of questions. Logical punctuation, in spite of the absence of information to the contrary in most handbooks, seems to be that in the following examples:

Appropriate questions asked were: What was his name?, Where did he come from?, and What did he do?

The program contained the following subjects: "What is the present situation?", "What shall we do to improve it?", and "Will our membership agree to the proposals?".

Well, will they?

The 1953 meeting at Los Angeles of the National Council of Teachers of English marked the fortieth anniversary of the College Section, the fifteenth anniversary of *College English*, and the fourth of the Conference on College

Composition and Communication. An eight-page brochure, mentioning the historical highlights, was given out for the occasion. In it there was reprinted a resolution adopted by the College Section back in 1913, as follows:

"In order to secure satisfactory results in college English, it is essential that the maximum number of students in Freshman English Composition assigned to an individual instructor should in no case exceed 60; and that when such an instructor has classes in other subjects, a corresponding reduction should be made in the number of students assigned him in English composition."

At the Fifth Midwestern English Conference, held at Northern Illinois State Teachers College at DeKalb last spring, the discussion group of college and high school teachers, on the subject of desirable standards and outcomes in the teaching of writing, made this point among others: "College English programs were criticized because entering students are often subjected to entrance and placement tests which in the minds of some 'are fifty years behind the times in their requirements of knowledge of formal grammar' and because future English teachers are ordinarily not so well trained to teach grammar and writing as to teach literature." — *Illinois English Bulletin*, December, 1953.

At a meeting of the Kansas State Teachers Association on November 6, 1953, two hundred English teachers attended a panel-discussion meeting participated in by two high school English teachers, one representative from a uni-

versity, one from a teachers college, and one from a junior college. The subject: articulating high school and college English. Plans are now under way for the creation of a state committee on articulation to develop a state-wide program.

At the meeting there seemed to be agreement on the following:

1. The Kansas pamphlet, "Suggested Standards in Composition for High Schools" (1947), might well be revised. It was felt that it would help teachers if a sample theme were included and properly marked. Also teachers would like standards to be given for oral composition as well as written composition.

2. It would be a good idea to work out a basic set of correction symbols for marking themes which could be used by both high school and college teachers.

3. "Visitation Days" (high school teachers visiting colleges) are helpful, but the time spent is usually too brief to accomplish much; more conferences in which high school and college teachers can get together are needed.

4. Some seemed to favor having the colleges send back several corrected themes of college freshmen to high school English teachers so that they could get a better idea of how the students were progressing and what some of the problems are.

5. Over half of the group seemed to think they would like to take part in an "articulation workshop."

Concerning the Indiana University mimeographed booklet, *Career Opportunities for Majors in English* (see pages 109 and 110, October issue, *College Composition and Communication*), Russell Noyes writes in the November, 1953, *CEA Critic*:

"In May of this year each faculty member of our department invited his half dozen or so best freshman students to

drop in to his office for friendly conferences. It was suggested to each student that perhaps, contrary to what he may have been led to believe, there were literally thousands of vocational and professional careers for which a major in English served as an excellent preparation. Every student who showed an interest was given a copy of our pamphlet to read and to take home.

"This fall our enrollment of English majors is up 24%. We attribute this good result largely to *Career Opportunities for Majors* plus the individual conferences.

"The pamphlet is being revised and enlarged and will be issued in printed form. We plan to distribute it to high school teachers of English and through them to interested students. Our freshman division counselors will be supplied with copies."

Perhaps you have recently received from Thomas W. Wilcox, editor, at Bennington College, Bennington, Vermont, the following concerning the *Exercise Exchange*:

"*Exercise Exchange* was inaugurated about a year and a half ago to encourage teachers of literature in secondary schools and in colleges to communicate their ideas and to swap examples of their teaching methods. Since then three issues have been published, and interest in the project has been growing. With the publication of this issue (Volume I, Number 4) we shall begin to distribute the magazine much more widely in the hope of persuading many more teachers to participate in this cooperative venture . . . Publication of *Exercise Exchange* is financed at present by grants from the Carnegie Corporation and the Lemberg Foundation, and therefore it is not necessary to charge for copies. If it should become necessary to charge for copies in the future, you will be noti-

fied and asked whether or not you wish to subscribe.

"The success of this enterprise will depend very largely on whether or not enough interesting material can be collected. We urge you, therefore, to send us examples of any original and successful techniques you have used in your courses and to continue to send us copies of your exercises as you invent them."

Any readers desiring a copy of this magazine, *Exercise Exchange*, should write to its editor at the address given in the first paragraph above.

The four numbers of Volume I (as indicated) have already been published, and although the exercises mainly concern literature, there were in the fourth number several dealing with language and composition:

S. B. Wynburne, of Stranmillis Training College (Teachers College), Belfast, Northern Ireland, contributes "An Examination Exercise in Practical Criticism" for a course in English Language (Com-

position and Usage)—the examination consisting of a Stephen Spender poem, and then a letter concerning it to be answered—eleven questions asked.

Cloyd Criswell of Lehigh University—"A Creative Writing Exercise" for a course in Creative Writing for Publication—gives students one of four situations (beginnings) to carry through in story form to a conclusion, and, in case of difficulty, a succeeding group. Examples: "You are caught in a snow storm on a street you know well, yet it seems strange to you. Night, cold flakes, dim lights. Why are you there?" Follow-up: "From somewhere in the shadows steps a man. You do not know him. He asks a direction of you. You think of the answer you mean to give him, but you never give it. Why not?"

John Wight, Brandeis University, "Parallel Passages for an Exercise in Expository Prose," gives two prose passages. Exercise: "Which of these do you think is better written? Give reasons for your choice."

Some of the Year's Work in College Composition and Communication

In the November, 1953, issue of *The Journal of Communication* there were articles containing suggestions for the teaching in each of the five areas of communication: observing, reading, writing, listening, and speaking.

Russell Fowler of Stephens College described a classroom experiment in "Teaching the Skills of Interpreting Pictorial Material." In a pioneering effort "to improve students' ability to analyze the communication that comes to them through the medium of pictures," Fowler and his students agreed on six basic

skills involved in analytical, critical looking at pictures and selected sample pictures to illustrate each skill. The pictures were reproduced in a series of six film strips, and a teaching script was produced to accompany each strip. Using this material, some teachers of Communication Skills at Stephens College are teaching students to recognize and evaluate purpose, significant details, desire or fear, previous experience and participation, symbols and personification, and transfer in what they observe.

Drawing on his experience in the read-

ing laboratories at Purdue University, Russell Cosper presents the case for including reading training as an area of teaching in the college department of English ("Improving Reading Ability"). He described the reading course at Purdue with its use of films and accelerators to increase reading rate and cites figures to indicate that students make significant gains in rate without loss in comprehension.

"We need to renew our emphasis upon the word 'communication' in dealing with written communication," Francis Drake of the University of Minnesota asserted in "Teaching Written Composition." Drake described methods he used to make writing experience a process of communication from student to student as well as from student to teacher. He recommended the use of a content theme such as language itself, as is done in the Communications Course in the General Studies program at Minnesota, to motivate written communication.

At the risk of being thought immodest, this reviewer would refer to his own article, "Teaching Listening Comprehension" in the November *Journal*. The article was a step-by-step description of the procedures used to teach listening skills to students in Communication Skills at Stephens College. The five stages of the training program were (1) exploration of the importance of listening; (2) examination of the process of listening; (3) study of the factors which help and hinder listening; (4) self-analysis of listening behavior; and (5) guided listening practice in and out of the classroom.

Completing the round-robin of communication skills was an article on "Suggested Techniques for Teaching Speech in the Freshman Program" by Ray Sandefur, University of Akron. Although most of the techniques mentioned are standard operating procedure for teachers of beginning speech courses, they

may be helpful to teachers planning speaking assignments in communication classes. (DONALD E. BIRD, Stephens College)

E. C. Hughes, "Communication in Relation to Research Personnel," *Chemical and Engineering News*, May 19, 1952 (as summarized in *The Journal of Communication*, November, 1953): This article is concerned with "the relation of communication with the normal personnel procedures of selection, training, supervision, and work of scientific research employees." The employer is often forced to choose between scientific ability and communication ability and usually has to take the former. "Industry must realize that inability to communicate is a more serious deficiency than just 'not being able to write a report' . . . The inability to communicate with others may also mean that the fellow will do a poor job of communicating with himself, i.e., imagining, hypothesizing, and generalizing below his real ability . . . Industry must not expect to find that the new employee has learned to communicate while studying science or engineering in college."

John A. Walter and Thomas L. Watson, "Communication Deficiencies of Senior and Graduate Chemical Engineers," *Journal of Chemical Education*, August, 1952 (as summarized in *The Journal of Communication*, November, 1953): This study of 532 reports written by University of Texas students indicates a definite need for more communication training for engineering students.

Lee S. Hultzen, "Communication in Linguistics," *American Speech*, February, 1953 (as summarized in *The Jour-*

nal of Communication, November, 1953): A plea, supported by numerous horrible examples, to make linguistic writing more communicative. Though aimed specifically at linguists and phoneticians, the arguments have wide applicability to research reports and scholarly writing in general.

C. K. Thomas, in "The Foreigner's English," *The Speech Teacher*, September, 1953, gives numerous examples to show why foreigners have trouble with English pronunciation, the fact being that each language has its own set of meaningful sound units, a certain range of variation in these sound units, peculiarities of its speakers in paying attention to some muscular and auditory details and ignoring others, its own word order, its own idioms. Mutual patience, therefore, is necessary between people speaking different languages.

"A Bibliography of Rhetoric and Public Address for the Year 1952" appears in *Speech Monographs* for June, 1953. Over 100 periodicals were studied and the appropriate contents classified as follows: Bibliography, Ancient Public Address (History and Culture, Theory, Practitioners), Medieval and Renaissance Public Address (History and Culture, Theory, Practitioners), Modern Public Address (History and Culture, Theory, Platform Address, Pulpit Address, Radio and Television, Debate, and Discussion).

"Making Composition Writing Meaningful" by Harold Newman (*High Points*, February, 1952), is designed to help high school teachers remove the lament of college professors and business men about "the barbarous writing of high-school students." Part of the methodology

begins with grading themes, with reasons given why a double grade, one for content and one for form or style, is artificial, illogical, and unrewarding to teachers and students alike. For example, "phrases such as 'poorly organized,' 'lack of unity,' 'poorly developed,' are too abstract for the adolescent's mind to grasp, too couched in generalities to provide a real stimulus for improvement. Students are not mental telepathists; they can't be expected to read what is going on in a teacher's mind when he rates their compositions. If, however, the students are given a plan which will help them to organize their ideas around certain points of emphasis at the same time that it serves as an instrument for measuring teacher reaction to the finished product, then, and only then, will the students feel secure."

Grades on papers indicate a competitive system: students against an inflexible standard set by the teacher or by the best paper in the class or by the class average; instead, a student's progress should be rated in terms of his ability level or of competition against his own record.

A student should subject his writing to a vigorous appraisal by himself, by his classmates, by class committees, or by the entire class. But students must know what to look for and how to criticize what they find important, i.e., "compass directions" which tell them whether or not they are on the course.

Recommendations to make writing a source of pleasure and an aid to clear and effective expression are:

1. Implant in the student a desire to write about subjects which are directly concerned with the problems of his own life (getting along with people, parental conflicts, etiquette, dating, earning money, feelings of inferiority, fears and worries, philosophy of life).

2. Make him feel that he has a right

to look at his subjects from whatever point of view he desires, even if it means "letting off steam." Too often a student's inhibitions are allowed to fester to such an extent that he craves an outlet for them. Writing acts as a psycho-therapeutic agent which by drawing out these inner compulsions and feelings of insecurity helps to ease the adolescent's tensions.

3. Inform him of the necessity for knowing exactly what he wants to say before he undertakes to write down his composition.

4. Show the desirability of following "compass directions" in writing: selection of suitable topic, theme-sentence, topic limitation, intelligent listing and grouping and arranging and choosing of ideas, effective opening with natural transition to body of composition, and appropriate title.

Henry Dan Piper, in "English and History as Professional Equipment for the Engineer" (*Journal of Engineering Education*, April, 1953), associates leadership with the ability to comprehend others and to communicate effectively with them. He writes that what the teacher as humanist seeks to offer is "training that will teach the technical student to use the resources of good English and a sense of historical relationships to order and to communicate his specialized technical knowledge and thereby give it broader social meaning than is possible by strictly scientific habits of mind" . . .

The kind of training needed by undergraduates in science and engineering cannot successfully be given by methods at present used by departments of history or by departments of English stressing literature. The suggested solution: "In general, I would require of every scientific and engineering student that he demonstrate, before graduation, a cer-

tain proficiency in the application of good English and a historical sense to the data of his special technical field. More specifically, I would have each student, sometime during his last two years in college, submit at least one full-dress essay dealing with some problem of this nature. His paper may be based on library research, or it may be the result of both outside reading and laboratory experiment. The subject may be a personality, an idea, an institution, or any combination of these topics. But, above all, it should be a subject of genuine professional interest; one that has aroused the student's enthusiasm and stimulated his imagination. Only then will he care enough about what he has written to benefit from criticism and advice . . . A satisfactory essay should give evidence not only of the writer's technical proficiency, but also of his ability to place his data in a historical framework, and to write about it clearly, accurately and interestingly. Without this ability can we say that any student has really mastered his professional discipline, or that he is educated in the true meaning of that word?"

"English Without Tears," by Doris Hartwell Hawse (*Junior College Journal*, March, 1953), discusses the functional method of teaching grammar, i.e., of determining student needs and the resulting classwork by student errors. The reasons for the plan are the current tendency toward the functional, the limited time available for individual attention in composition, and the students' dislike of "theoretical" grammar. Half-page weekly classroom themes and short speeches supply faults typical enough and frequent enough to be discussed in class. The rules are covered with examples and then written in a special section of a notebook, and constantly reviewed. The

textbook is used as a reference work, and students are encouraged to keep it for that use after the ending of the course. The plan has been in use for five years, and has two important advantages: freedom from stultifying effects of unrelieved theory and obvious usefulness as a tool for the work of life.

Earnest Brandenburg and Philip A. Neal, in "Graphic Techniques for Evaluating Discussion and Conference Procedures" (*The Quarterly Journal of Speech*, April, 1953) describe methods of extending criticisms and suggestions for improvement to all the participants in a class discussion and not to the student chairman or leader alone. The article presents and explains several graphic techniques which instructors at Air University at Maxwell Field Air Force Base, Alabama, have successfully used to improve the work of conference participants. Nine graphs are included, illustrating quantity of individual participations, flow of discussion from member to member or member to group, number of participations within various time segments, the relative merit of the contributions through the use of symbols, kind of role played by the participant, typical reactions from group members, amount of influence of members, and final judgments of the relative merits of various participants.

The theme of the successful teaching of composition discussed in "College English for Freshmen," by Sister Mary Emmanuel (*Junior College Journal*, April, 1953), is centered on the sentence, "We never wrote an unnecessary word." The aim was to publish the writing, to market it, and so students wrote verses, short stories, radio scripts for the Dr. Christian Award, juveniles, book reviews,

research papers, letters to publishers. About one third of the class time was given to formal instruction, the remainder to readings and criticism. The class whose work is described in some detail was in the upper group at Gwynedd-Mercy Junior College.

"English Teaching and the Fourth Estate" (by Louis W. Lyons, Curator, Nieman Foundation, Harvard University), *The CEA Critic*, April, 1953, stresses English as a tool for the journalist but other things are also important. Distinguishing the temperament of young creative writers from that of young people preparing for journalism, the author outlines and discusses the discipline needed by the latter: objectivity; facility in writing, in vocabulary, in precision, in accuracy of phrase, in definiteness of expression; perennial curiosity; accuracy; concreteness; painstakingness; imagination; doggedness; and responsibility.

"It helps mightily if other departments also pay some attention to the English used in papers. One of the most careful editors of themes I know is a history professor. I suspect a student is more apt to be impressed by corrections of his sentences in a subject that is concerned with content rather than style."

David S. Berkeley, "Agreement of Subject and Verb in Anticipatory *There* Clauses" (*American Speech*, May, 1953) cites many examples to show that writers and speakers frequently use plural subjects (mainly two or more singular nouns joined by *and*) after "there is," "there exists." Therefore he concludes that usage does not conform to many handbook-recommendations which state that "after the expletive *there* the verb is singular or plural according to the number of the subject that follows."

In two articles, "Developmental Reading at Purdue" (*Journal of Higher Education*, May, 1953) and "Reading Comprehension and Speed" (*School and Society*, June 6, 1953), Russell Cosper and Barriss Mills describe the group instruction in the Developmental Reading Program which has been offered as course work at Purdue University since 1950, required of some students and elected by many others. The aim is to improve basic reading skills of average and superior readers, as distinguished from handicapped, who are referred to a remedial reading clinic. The two articles discuss in some detail the kinds of training devices used and their relative merits (reading films, accelerator reading, tachistoscopic practice, and mature essays); types of tests used to measure progress in speed and comprehension of experimental and control groups (Diagnostic Test—Survey Section, the Harvard Reading Test, the Iowa Silent Reading Test); and the necessity and importance of teaching developmental reading both in secondary schools and in colleges. The results show, after four semesters of operation, that reading speed can be increased significantly, that comprehension can be improved, that the average and superior reader can be benefited more than the slow reader, and that a large part of the gains achieved is retained for at least a year and a half after instruction.

Walter S. Avis, in "The Past Participle *Drank*: Standard American English" (*American Speech*, May, 1953) states that handbook and dictionary authorities who categorically deny that *drank* cannot correctly be a past participle are not supported by the facts of usage as recorded in the field records of *The Linguistic Atlas of the United States and Canada*. With a sufficient number of cul-

tured speakers as guides, "we cannot refuse to accept the participle *drank* as standard American English, at least in the regions where the evidence argues for its acceptance."

In "Reading and Getting Ideas" (*Education*, May, 1953) E. W. Dolch gives advice on teaching students who have trouble getting their textbook assignments read. For this type of student the goal is not "speed of reading" so much as "speed in getting ideas." Six methods—discussed in moderate detail—for discovering the author's ideas are the following: (1) Does the textbook have "type signals" of the author's plan or outline? (2) Does the author number or letter his ideas? (3) Does the author use what are sometimes called "half signals" like "one," "another," "besides," "in addition," "finally," and the like? (4) Does the author "summarize ahead," that is, does he give little previews at the beginning of chapters telling what he is going to take up? (5) Try reading only the beginnings of paragraphs. (6) Is there any other special plan the author follows that the student should become acquainted with?

In "The Colgate Plan for Improving Student Writing," May, 1953, issue of *Association of American Colleges Bulletin*, Strang Lawson tells how Colgate University has developed "a series of organized writing experiences in non-English courses, as a function of the day-by-day learning process. This consists of a planned calendar of mimeographed writing assignments, carefully prepared by the English department in collaboration with the staffs of Core courses such as those in Science, Public Affairs, Philosophy and Religion. The topics always originate with the subject-matter staffs,

and are rooted in the materials and educational purposes of the courses."

The sequence of papers is from simple to complex, and includes enumeration, summary, laboratory description, case or problem analysis, comparison, evaluation of "popular" scientific journalism, field reports and documentation. Subject-matter instructors read and grade the papers, taking into account effectiveness of communication, and following a guide prepared by the English staff. These readers circle what they wish corrected, and students make their own corrections; students needing help are referred to the Writing Laboratory. The Department of English is the co-ordinating agent in the plan; inter-staff cooperation is excellent.

"Beam and Mote—An Open Letter to Colleagues of the Faculty of Unique College," by L. A. King (*Journal of Higher Education*, October, 1953), is a strong plea for assistance from other departments in making permanent the habits of correct and effective writing in our students: (1) by setting better examples of English (classroom use) and speaking on the part of the teaching staff; (2) by more severe penalties for bad writing done in non-English courses; (3) by giving more practice in writing, for example, having fewer objective tests and more essay-type tests; and (4) by varying written assignments so that students cannot turn in the same paper, year after year, from the fraternity or dormitory files—and also by a careful reading of all assignments turned in.

In "English Naturally," *North Carolina English Teacher*, May, 1953, W. L. Wilson has suggestions for motivation of students really to use English as an ef-

fective tool of expression. He uses code forms to indicate the structural relationships of word-groups in sentences—a method that can be a game and that is not difficult to learn. We group words in only eight ways, and there are only four structural uses for these eight forms. The author illustrates with clauses and phrases, and with code numbers for groups made with verbs and subjects and for groups without assertive verbs and subjects. "Our problem as teachers is to help people to become aware of relationships among word-groups that carry our thoughts . . . Using these symbols to express structure alone, we can see how sentences are built. Marking structure in this way shows that grammar means the real relationships which exist among our words."

In helping students who seem unable to recognize the awkwardness of the sentences they have written, David M. Rein of Case Institute of Technology uses the following method: "Trying an experiment, I culled fifteen of the worst sentences I could find in one set of papers, mimeographed them and handed a copy to each student in the class. It proved a festive occasion, the students laughing at the shortcomings of one another. Not a single sentence stood up against the collective criticism of the class. More than one student who tried to defend his own sentence took a part in tearing down someone else's. I found the procedure successful, not only that day, but many times thereafter. Every student, it became clear to me, quickly understands that he writes for an audience and that he has failed when his audience considers his project unsatisfactory. When his work is rejected by his classmates, he has no choice except to try to turn out a better product."—"The Awkward Sentence," *The CEA Critic*, October, 1953.